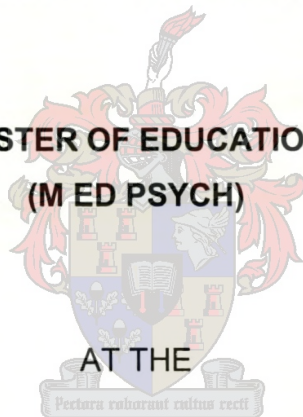


**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MORAL REASONING AND PERCEPTIONS
OF FAMILY FUNCTIONING DURING ADOLESCENCE**

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Declaration

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that this assignment is my own original work, and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it at any university in order to obtain a degree.

Signature:

Date:

SUMMARY

This study focused on the moral development of adolescents, their perceptions of their families' functioning in terms of various dimensions and the relationship between these perceptions and adolescents' levels of moral development. The research group comprised of 268 learners attending an Afrikaans secondary school. All the participants had Afrikaans as their first language and they were categorised into two age cohorts; namely the 13/14-year-olds and the 17/18-year-olds. Gender was also represented in the study.

The participants' levels of moral reasoning were measured by the *Menings oor Sosiale Optrede Vraelys (MOSOV)*, an unstandardised instrument that was formulated in terms of Kohlberg's cognitive-developmental theory of moral development. This instrument consisted of six moral dilemmas. According to Kohlberg's theory moral development is culturally universal and follows an invariant sequence of stages. Furthermore, moral judgment takes place on three levels, the pre-conventional, conventional and post-conventional levels. The pre-conventional level usually develops during childhood, most adolescents and adults will only reach the conventional level and only a small percentage of adults will reach the post-conventional level of moral reasoning. Participants' perceptions of family functioning were measured by the *Family Functioning in Adolescence Questionnaire (FFAQ)*. This standardized instrument measures family functioning in terms of six dimensions, namely: structure, affect, communication, behaviour control, value transmission and external systems.

The results for moral reasoning levels indicated that the post-conventional level was the most common level of moral reasoning used by participants (at least 56% of the time). This tendency was represented for both age and gender variables within the research group. The second most common level of moral reasoning was the conventional level. Only a small representation of the pre-conventional level occurred. The results were inconsistent with Kohlberg's theory in terms of the proportional representation of the three levels.

The results for participants' perceptions of their families' functioning indicated that their perceptions of family functioning for each of the dimensions, was mainly average (mean stanine scores of 4–6 were obtained). Significant mean differences between the various research groupings were also found for some of the dimensions.

The results indicated that only two of the MOSOV's moral dilemmas correlated significantly with some of the family functioning dimension mean scores. One was a positive correlation whilst the other was a negative correlation. The general absence of significant relationships and the presence of a significantly negative correlation between moral reasoning levels and perceptions of family functioning was inconsistent with the literature that generally supports the view that a positive relationship exists between family functioning and moral development of the adolescent.

A secondary focus was to measure the construct validity and reliability of the MOSOV instrument for this study, since this was an unstandardised instrument. The results showed that construct validity was present but reliability was not high enough. The results of the study therefore need to be treated with circumspect.

OPSOMMING

Hierdie studie het gefokus op die morele ontwikkeling van adolessente, hul persepsies van hoe hul gesinne funksioneer in terme van verskeie dimensies, asook die verband tussen hierdie persepsies en die vlakke van morele ontwikkeling wat by adolessente voorkom. Die ondersoekgroep het uit 268 leerders bestaan, wat almal verbonde is aan dieselfde sekondêre skool. Die deelnemers wat almal Afrikaans eerste taal-gebruikers is, is in twee ouderdomsgroepe verdeel, naamlik: die 13/14 jariges en die 17/18 jariges. Geslag is ook in die studie verteenwoordig.

Die deelnemers se vlakke van morele ontwikkeling is met behulp van die *Menings oor Sosiale Optrede Vraelys (MOSOV)* gemeet - 'n nie-gestandaardiseerde instrument wat op grond van Kohlberg se kognitiewe-ontwikkelingsteorie van morele ontwikkeling geformuleer is. Hierdie instrument bestaan uit ses morele dilemmas. Volgens Kohlberg se teorie is morele ontwikkeling kultureel universeel en verloop volgens 'n reeks onveranderlike stadia. Daarbenewens geskied morele oordeel op drie vlakke, naamlik: die voor-konvensionele, konvensionele en na-konvensionele vlakke. Die voor-konvensionele ontwikkelingsvlak ontwikkel gewoonlik tydens die kinderjare, terwyl die meeste adolessente en volwassenes die konvensionele vlak bereik en slegs 'n klein persentasie volwassenes bereik gewoonlik die na-konvensionele vlak van morele redenering. Die deelnemers se persepsies van gesinsfunksionering is met behulp van *Die Vraelys vir Gesinsfunksionering gedurende Adolessensie (VGFA)* gemeet. Hierdie gestandaardiseerde instrument kan gebruik word om gesinsfunksionering in terme van ses dimensies te meet, naamlik: struktuur, affek, kommunikasie, gedragsbeheer, waarde-oordrag en eksterne sisteme.

Die bevindinge ten opsigte van die morele redeneringsvlakke het aangedui dat die na-konvensionele vlak die algemeenste voorkom en in hierdie ondersoek deur die meeste deelnemers gebruik is (ten minste in 56% van die gevalle). Hierdie neiging was opvallend ten opsigte van beide ouderdom- en geslagsveranderlikes in die ondersoekgroep. Die vlak

van morele redenering wat die tweede meeste voorgekom het, is die konvensionele vlak, terwyl die gebruik van die voor-konvensionele vlak die minste voorgekom het. Dié bevindinge was teenstrydig met Kohlberg se teorie in terme van die proporsionele verteenwoordiging van die drie vlakke.

Die bevindinge ten opsigte van die deelnemers se persepsies van hul gesinne se funksionering dui daarop dat hul persepsies vir elke dimensie hoofsaaklik gemiddeld is (gemiddelde stanegetellings van 4 - 6 is behaal). Wat sommige van die dimensies betref, het daar ook betekenisvolle verskille tussen die gemiddelde tellings van die subgroepe voorgekom.

Slegs twee van die MOSOV se morele dilemmas dui op 'n betekenisvolle verband met sommige van die dimensies van gesinsfunksionering se gemiddelde tellings. Die een dilemma dui op 'n positiewe verband, terwyl die ander een op 'n negatiewe verband dui. Die algemene afwesigheid van betekenisvolle verbande en die voorkoms van 'n betekenisvolle negatiewe verband tussen morele redeneringsvlakke en persepsies van gesinsfunksionering, ondersteun nie die literatuur nie, in terme waarvan 'n positiewe verband tussen gesinsfunksionering en morele ontwikkeling by adolessente verwag sou word.

'n Sekondêre fokus van die studie was om die konstruk geldigheid en die betroubaarheid van die MOSOV instrument met betrekking tot hierdie ondersoek te bepaal, aangesien dit 'n nie-gestandaardiseerde instrument is. Die ondersoek se resultate dui op die aanwesigheid van konstruk geldigheid, maar dat die betroubaarheid daarvan nie baie hoog is nie. Daarom moet die resultate van hierdie studie met omsigtigheid hanteer word.

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LIST OF CONTENTS

CONTENTS	PAGE
SUMMARY	(ii)
OPSOMMING	(iv)
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	(vi)
LIST OF TABLES	(xiv)
 CHAPTER ONE: RELEVANCE, STATEMENT OF PROBLEM AND OBJECTIVE	
1.1 MOTIVATION FOR AND RELEVANCE OF STUDY	1
1.2 STATEMENT OF PROBLEM	3
1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS	4
1.4 OBJECTIVES	4
1.5 HYPOTHESES	5
1.6 RESEARCH METHOD	5
1.6.1 Research design	5
1.6.2 Literature review	5
1.6.3 Empirical study	6
1.6.3.1 Participants	6
1.6.3.2 Measuring instruments	6
1.7 DEFINITION OF TERMS	6
1.7.1 Adolescence	6
1.7.2 Moral(s)	7

1.7.3	Moral conduct	8
1.7.4	Moral development	8
1.7.5	Moral reasoning	9
1.7.6	Family functioning	9
1.8	STRUCTURE OF PRESENTATION	10

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1	INTRODUCTION	11
2.2	AN OVERVIEW OF THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO ADOLESCENT MORAL DEVELOPMENT	12
2.2.1	Introduction	12
2.2.2	The psychoanalytical approach to the development of moral reasoning	12
2.2.2.1	A brief overview of the psychoanalytic approach	12
2.2.2.2	Moral development in terms of the psychoanalytic approach	13
2.2.3	The social learning approach to the development of moral reasoning	14
2.2.4	The cognitive-developmental approach to the development of moral reasoning	16
2.2.4.1	Introduction	16
2.2.4.2	John Dewey's model of moral development	17
2.2.4.3	Jean Piaget's model of moral development	17
2.2.4.4	Kohlberg's theory of moral development	18
(i)	Introduction	18
(ii)	Characteristics of Kohlberg's three levels of moral development	18
(iii)	Kohlberg's six-stage model of moral development	19
(iv)	Principal factors that determine an individual's level of moral Development	22
(v)	Criticisms of Kohlberg's theory and alternative views	22

(vi) Positive aspects of Kohlberg's model	23
2.2.5 A synthesis of the above-mentioned approaches to moral development	24
2.3 FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE MORAL DEVELOPMENT DURING ADOLESCENCE	25
2.3.1 Cognitive development	25
2.3.2 The role of the peer group	26
2.3.3 Religion	26
2.3.4 Socio-economic status	26
2.3.5 The role of the community	27
2.3.6 The role of the media	28
2.3.6.1 Television	28
(a) Sex	28
(b) Violence	29
(c) Idealisation of immaturity	29
(d) Materialism	29
(e) Hedonism	29
(f) Commercialism of the media	29
2.3.6.2 Computer games	29
2.3.6.3 Music	29
2.3.6.4 The internet	30
2.4 FAMILY FUNCTIONING	30
2.4.1 The concept 'family'	30
2.4.2 The different approaches to the study of families	31
2.4.2.1 The family life cycle	31
2.4.2.2 The symbolic interactional approach	31
2.4.2.3 Social exchange theory	31
2.4.2.4 The systems perspective	31
(i) Introduction	31
(ii) The different systems models of family functioning	32

(a)	The Circumplex Model	32
(b)	The Beavers-Timberlawn Model	33
(c)	The McMaster Model	34
2.5	MAJOR DIMENSIONS OF FAMILY FUNCTIONING ACCORDING TO THE FFAQ	34
2.5.1	Family structure	34
2.5.2	Communication within the family	37
2.5.3	Family affect	39
2.5.4	Behaviour control within the family	40
2.5.5	Value transmission within the family	42
2.5.6	External systems and the family	42
2.6	THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FAMILY FUNCTIONING AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF ADOLESCENT MORAL REASONING	44
2.6.1	The nature of the parent-adolescent relationship	44
2.6.2	The frequency and intensity of parent-adolescent interaction	45
2.6.3	Types of discipline/parenting styles	45
2.6.3.1	Authoritarian parents	46
2.6.3.2	Authoritative parents	47
2.6.3.3	Permissive parents	47
2.6.3.4	Uninvolved parents	48
2.6.3.5	Erratic parenting style	48
2.6.4	The influence of different parenting styles on adolescent moral development	48
2.6.4.1	Authoritarian disciplinary styles	49
2.6.4.2	Authoritative parents	49
2.6.4.3	Permissive parents	49
2.6.4.4	Erratic style of discipline	49
2.6.5	Family communication and its influence on adolescent moral development	50
2.6.6	The socialisation process within the family and its influence on adolescent	50

	moral development	
2.6.7	The influence of family affect on adolescent moral development	51
2.6.8	The influence of religion on moral development	52
2.7	CONCLUSION	52

CHAPTER 3 – EMPIRICAL STUDY

3.1	AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY	53
3.1.1	Aim	53
3.1.2	Objectives	53
3.2	HYPOTHESES	53
3.3	SELECTION OF RESEARCH GROUP	55
3.4	MEASURING INSTRUMENTS	56
3.4.1	Introduction	56
3.4.2	Menings oor Sosiale Optrede Vraelys (MOSOV)	57
3.4.2.1	Introduction	57
3.4.2.2	The first version of the MOSOV	57
3.4.2.3	The revised version of the MOSOV	60
3.4.3	The Family Functioning in Adolescence Questionnaire (FFAQ)	60
3.4.3.1	Introduction	60
3.4.3.2	The development and standardization of the FFAQ	60
3.4.3.3	Reliability of the FFAQ	61
3.4.3.4	Validity of the FFAQ	61
3.5	RESEARCH PROCEDURE	62

3.6 RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS	64
3.6.1 Introduction	64
3.6.2 Results relating to levels of moral reasoning	64
3.6.3 Validity and reliability of the revised version of the MOSOV instrument	65
3.6.3.1 Introduction	65
3.6.3.2 Construct validity	66
3.6.3.3 Reliability	66
3.6.3.4 The relationships between the individual stories	66
3.6.4 Moral reasoning levels of the various groupings within the research group	68
3.6.4.1 Modal scores representing moral reasoning levels for the various research groupings	68
3.6.4.2 Frequencies of the three levels of moral reasoning for the gender and age groupings	72
3.6.4.3 Mean differences found for age and gender groupings per story	74
3.6.5 Results pertaining to family functioning	75
3.6.6 The relationship between moral reasoning scores and family functioning.	80
3.6.7 Conclusions	83

CHAPTER FOUR: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 INTRODUCTION	86
4.2 FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS	86
4.3 SHORTCOMINGS OF THE STUDY	88
4.4 IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY FOR PARENTS AND EDUCATORS	88
4.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH	90

LIST OF REFERENCES	91
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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 HERMANN EN DIE MEDISYNE (the first moral dilemma in the Menings oor Sosiale Optrede Vraelys).	99
APPENDIX 2 MORAL REASONING: MEANS AND STANDARD DEVIATIONS FOR STORIES ACCORDING TO VARIOUS GROUPINGS	102
APPENDIX 3 MORAL REASONING: DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE MEANS OF EACH RESPONSE OF THE VARIOUS PARTICIPANT GROUPINGS	104

LIST OF TABLES

	Headings	Page
Table 3.1	Composition of research group	56
Table 3.2	Description of Kohlberg's six-stage model of moral development	58
Table 3.3	Reliability of the six stages of moral development	59
Table 3.4	Inter-correlation matrixes of the different stages of moral development	59
Table 3.5	Reliability coefficients of the FFAQ (N = 7307).	61
Table 3.6	Composition of revised research group	64
Table 3.7	Moral reasoning levels: Relationships between total scores of six stories and total for all stories together (N = 268)	67
Table 3.8(a)	Moral reasoning levels: within and across the six stories based on the mode as central tendency measure per gender and age group (N=268)	70
Table 3.8(b)	Moral reasoning levels: within and across the six stories based on the mode as central tendency measure per gender within age group (N=268)	71
Table 3.9	Frequencies of each of the three levels of moral reasoning for age and gender groupings (N=268)	73

Table 3.10	Moral reasoning: Differences between means of each story for the age and gender groupings (T-test for independent samples).	75
Table 3.11	Family functioning: means of stanines and standard deviations for the various groupings	77
Table 3.12	Family functioning: significance of mean differences between components for the various research groupings	78
Table 3.13	The relationship between moral reasoning and family functioning: mean scores	81

CHAPTER 1: RELEVANCE, STATEMENT OF PROBLEM AND OBJECTIVE

1.1 MOTIVATION FOR AND RELEVANCE OF STUDY

Post apartheid South Africans have many rights, freedoms and opportunities previously denied to them. Currently South Africans are less restricted in how they live their lives when compared to the past. The country's Constitution provides a solid platform for the promotion of human rights and the rights of individuals in making choices for their own lives. Thus, human rights issues such as gender equality, children's rights, non-racism, non-sexism and the right to sexual orientation are currently the focus of attention in our society.

Accompanying this new freedom has been the apparent moral decay as evidenced by the high crime rate currently being experienced in South Africa on all levels of society. Notwithstanding the poor socio-economic conditions in which the majority of the population lives, people nowadays seem to engage in criminal activity more easily than in the past. Other socially unacceptable acts, such as corruption in the private and public sectors seems to be more prevalent than in the past. The Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) epidemic currently sweeping through our country has also prompted us to question whether there has been a decline in the morals and values of contemporary South African society. The Human Immuno-deficiency Virus (HIV) infection rate is alarming despite the numerous HIV/AIDS Awareness campaigns run by both the public and private sectors as well as the availability of free contraceptives at public health institutions.

Families, as the microcosms of society are currently experiencing many challenges and tensions as society changes. Changes in family dynamics may occur as changes in the broader South African society take place. Contemporary society is exposed to the many influences arising from all over the world and made easily available through the advancement of media technology. Existing morals and values within the family may be questioned in light of these external influences, thus, subsequently impacting on the functioning of the family. Alternatively, the external influences on the family may be impacting on its functioning, which could subsequently affect the moral and value systems of the family by influencing factors such as parenting attitudes, behaviours, skills or styles and the relationships between family members. A study conducted by Spinrad, Losoya,

Eisenberg, Fabes, Shepard, Cumberland, Guthrie & Murphy (1999: 334) supports other studies that contend that warm and supportive parenting behaviours are likely to promote empathetic concern and moral behaviour in children. Smetana (1999: 319) underscores the above point by stating "parents are centrally important by virtue of their concern with their child's development and welfare, their affective relationship and extensive interaction history with their child and their ability to provide the types of interactions that facilitate moral development."

Codrington (1999) drew a profile of South African youth and families using information from the National Census of 1996. The Youth and Family Census Profile ranked family as the second most important factor in young people's lives with 96% of young people saying it was important. However, despite 72% of young people claiming to enjoy their parents, there seemed to be communication problems. These problems are usually caused by the fact that parents and their children having very few common topics for discussion as well as the pressure of limited time. The census also revealed that almost 75% of mothers work outside the home, and only about 50% arrive home before 17:00. Only 25% of fathers and 50% of all mothers spend more than two hours per week talking to their children. Young people stated that it was unlikely that they would turn to their parents for advice on personal issues. Just fewer than 50% said that they would turn to their mom; only 17.6% would turn to dad. Only 23.5% stated that they 'definitely' spend regular meaningful time with their parents. Almost 66% of young people have already experienced divorce in their families.

In view of the above I am therefore concerned about the level of moral conduct and moral reasoning occurring in our society and the influence that family functioning has on the development of morals of children. This concern is also shared by Damon (in Okin and Reich, 1999: 286) who describes the extent to which American society is failing in the moral development of its children as a societal problem 'of the first magnitude.' Okin and Reich add that if the situation is not urgently addressed, it is likely to worsen, since those whose moral development is stunted will be part of those responsible for raising the next generation of citizens. I am particularly concerned about the moral development of adolescents since they are the next generation of adults, leaders, workers and teachers, who would in turn, be responsible for imparting morals and values to their children. This future generation of parents would be determining to some extent the kind of moral fibre that would pervade through future society. Adolescents fall within the age group of South Africans who are most at risk of being infected with HIV. Thus in my opinion their

experience of family functioning as well as their levels of moral development will be important factors in determining whether they live lives that are less at risk of contracting HIV. A study by Hart, Atkins & Ford (1999) found that the family is one of the important influences on the formation of adolescent moral identity development. Their findings supported the view that cognitively and socially rich family environments help facilitate adolescent identity development.

Douvan and Adelson (in Louw, 1992: 413) are of the view that the adolescent's peer group play a significant role in the development of his/her value system, since the need to be accepted by the peer group places much pressure on the adolescent to conform to the group's standards and behavioural limits. However, conformity to the peer group's values could reinforce the values the adolescent learnt from his/her parents, since parents usually encourage their adolescent children to befriend peers who have similar values. Gavin and Furman (in Jaffe, 1998: 287) add to this view by stating: "Peers usually model and reinforce in each other the same behaviours and values that they learn from their parents."

Currently, many South African families are under pressure for various reasons such as the high divorce rate (mentioned above), spiralling unemployment rates, the high costs of living and working parents not spending adequate time with their children. Violence within and outside the family is also common, being fuelled by social problems such as poverty, drug and alcohol abuse and gangsterism that prevails in many communities. It must therefore be quite challenging for family members to foster a positive family environment.

1.2 STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

The democratisation of South African society has brought socio-political freedom to all its citizens. However, it seems as if South Africans were not prepared for the social transformation that accompanied this watershed in the country's history. It is therefore important to examine the functioning of families, given the social changes and whether family functioning is related in some way to the moral development of adolescent offspring. This relationship has (to my knowledge) not been researched as yet in South Africa. Related local research that I am aware of is:

- Beard (1988) investigated the extent to which the variables sex, intelligence, population group, ethnicity and religion were significant factors in moral reasoning in South African adolescents representing the Asian, black, white and coloured 'population groups.'

- Development and measurement of moral reasoning of Afrikaans-speaking high school pupils by Bester (1992). The aim of this research was to investigate how the development of moral reasoning occurs in Afrikaans-speaking adolescents during their high school years. Bester devised his own instrument to determine levels of moral reasoning, based on Kohlberg's model. I have used a revised version of this test in this study.
- Smith (1992) studied the relationship between social experience and moral reasoning. He also examined aspects of Kohlberg's universality claims.
- Tudin, Straker and Mendolsohn (1994) investigated the relationship between Kohlberg's stages of moral development and exposure to political and social complexity. The participants were white and black first year social work university students, ranging from ages 18 to 24.
- Dowling (1999) discusses the paradox that parents and schools face in the moral education of their children. Children are taught to conform to a set of traditional/community values and standards on the one hand. On the other hand, they are encouraged to work out their own moral point of view. The author offers a solution to this moral paradox.
- Ferns and Thom (2001) investigated the cultural universality of the stages of moral development in Kohlberg's theory. White and black South African adolescents were studied.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- 1.3.1 Does Kohlberg's invariant stage model of moral development apply to the moral development of South African adolescents?
- 1.3.2 Is there a relationship between family functioning and adolescent moral development in the South African context?

1.4 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this study are:

- 1.4.1 To investigate the levels of moral reasoning amongst the participants.
- 1.4.2 To investigate whether there are differences in the levels of participants' moral reasoning in terms of gender and age groupings within the research sample.
- 1.4.3 To investigate the participants' perceptions of the different dimensions of their families' functioning in terms of age and gender groupings.

- 1.4.4 To investigate the relationship between the various dimensions of family functioning and the participants' level of moral reasoning in terms of age and gender groupings within the sample.

1.5 HYPOTHESES

- H1: There are differences in adolescents' levels of moral reasoning in terms of age.
HO1: There are no differences in adolescents' levels of moral reasoning in terms of age.
- H2: There are gender differences in adolescents' levels of moral reasoning.
HO2: There are no gender differences in adolescents' levels of moral reasoning.
- H3: Adolescents of different ages have different perceptions of the dimensions of their families' functioning.
HO3: Adolescents of different ages do not have different perceptions of the dimensions of their families' functioning.
- H4: There are gender differences in the perceptions that adolescents have about the different dimensions of their families' functioning.
HO4: There are no gender differences in the perceptions that adolescents have about the different dimensions of their families' functioning.
- H5: The levels of moral reasoning that adolescents achieve correlate positively with their perceptions of functioning of their families in terms of age.
HO5: The levels of moral reasoning that adolescents achieve do not positively correlate with their perceptions of functioning of their families in terms of age.
- H6: The levels of moral reasoning that adolescents achieve correlate positively with their perceptions of functioning of their families in terms of gender.
HO6: The levels of moral reasoning that adolescents achieve do not positively correlate with their perceptions of functioning of their families in terms of gender.

1.6 RESEARCH METHOD (explained in detail in Chapter 3)

1.6.1 Research design

The study would be based on a correlational research design, involving a quantitative study of the levels of moral reasoning of adolescents as well as their perceptions of their

families' functioning, using primary data. The data would be collected using the two research instruments mentioned below. Psychometric techniques will therefore be used to test the abovementioned hypotheses (Louw, 1992: 37; Mouton, 2001: 69-70).

1.6.2 Literature review

The literature review deals with the theories dealing with moral development, in particular Kohlberg's theory of moral development. Theories suggesting alternative views to that of Kohlberg's theory will also be mentioned. Theories concerning family functioning and its impact on moral development of adolescent children will also be discussed.

1.6.3 Empirical study

1.6.3.1 Participants

The participants in this study will be drawn from the population of Afrikaans-speaking adolescent learners attending a (formerly coloured) high school in the Kraaifontein area. About two-thirds of the learners reside in the area where the school is located. Most of these learners come from working class socio-economic backgrounds. The remaining one-third of the learners reside in the neighbouring rural districts, most also coming from socio-economically impoverished backgrounds. The participants will be all grades 8 - 11 learners. The reason for making this choice is that the study will be conducted on two age ranges, namely thirteen to fourteen year-olds and seventeen to eighteen year-olds. The number of participants should be about 300. Participants will comprise of males and females.

1.6.3.2 Measuring instruments:

- A revised version of Bester's moral reasoning questionnaire (*Menings oor Sosiale Optrede Vraelys*) will be used to determine the level of moral development of the participants (Bester, 2002).
- Family Functioning in Adolescence Questionnaire (FFAQ) provides a means of assessing the psychosocial health of the family during the stage of having adolescent children. It examines adolescents' perceptions of six dimensions of family functioning.

1.7 DEFINITION OF TERMS

1.7.1 Adolescence

- Crowther (1995) defines adolescence as the period in a person's life when he or she develops from a child into an adult.
- Jaffe (1998: 25) defines adolescence as: 'the life period that begins with the onset of puberty or the shift to middle school and ends when an individual is economically self-sufficient and has taken on several adult roles.'
- Corsini (1999: 21) defines adolescence as the period of life beginning with puberty and ending with the completed growth and physical maturity. In humans this period usually is from ages 12 to 21 in females and from 13 to 22 in males. This period is marked by major changes in sexual characteristics, body image, sexual interest, career development, intellectual development and self-concept.
- Since the study would be conducted using participants in certain age cohorts (as mentioned above), it would be appropriate to also define adolescence in terms of the chronological approach. Adolescence is usually associated with the ages of about 12/13 to 22 or 25 years. A distinction can be made between early adolescence (12 – 15 years), middle adolescence (15 – 18 years), and late adolescence (18 – 22/25 years). In this approach gender differences are normally taken into account, mainly because puberty in females occurs approximately 2 years earlier as compared to males.
- Ackermann (2001: 104-105) defines adolescence in terms of a developmental approach, describing this phase as a process of exploration and the making of decisions regarding individual matters such as future goals, religion, politics, moral values, et cetera. He also describes this phase of growth as 'a process of movement from relative dependence to relative independence and autonomy.' Ackermann adds that internal levels of psycho-social maturity determine the beginning and ending of adolescence. It is therefore a critically important developmental process of transition that differs in length for each individual. I concur with this definition.

For the purposes of this research the concept of adolescence will be defined in terms of Ackermann's definition.

1.7.2 Moral(s)

- Corsini (1999: 607) defines the term 'moral' as 'describing persons or groups whose conduct is ethical or proper.'
- Aspin (2002) gives a historical background of the term 'moral' by stating: "The word 'moral' comes from the Latin ('mos, moris', plural 'mores') and meant initially simply the ways in which people behaved. From that developed very rapidly an emphasis

upon the ways in which it was felt desirable, right or proper that people should behave and this gave the normative dimension to the word that was once merely descriptive (this was also true of “ethos” in Greek). Thus from this developed an emphasis upon moral guidelines that rapidly acquired the status and force of prescriptions or rules in relation to people’s actions, volitions, intentions, or character. Moral maxims or principles are concerned with matters of people’s ability to discern and act upon the distinction between right and wrong, good and evil, and with goodness or badness of character, disposition or behaviour traits. They imply a concern for the development of a settled disposition in people to make distinctions between right and wrong in matters of inter-personal conduct and relations and the ways in which such conduct and relationships are and should be regulated.” (Aspin, 2002).

1.7.3 Moral conduct

- Corsini (1999: 608) defines this concept as “Behaviour that conforms to the accepted set of values, customs, or rules of a given society or religious group.”
- Aspin (2002) defines *Morality* as having to do with our actions and conduct with the aim of the promoting of good and the avoidance of harm towards others: moral action and moral judgement is always “other-regarding”. This implies that one’s brand of morality is manifested in one’s moral conduct.
- If we consider the concept *moral conduct* to be synonymous with *moral behaviour* then the definition of moral behaviour given by Maccoby in Windmiller, Lambert & Elliot (1980: 5) is applicable in this regard. He defines moral behaviour as behaviour defined by a group as good or right and for which the social group administers social sanctions.

1.7.4 Moral development

Corsini (1999: 608) basis his definition of this concept on the theories of Piaget and Kohlberg on moral development, stating that the term refers to ‘the gradual development of a person’s concepts of right and wrong, conscience, ethical and religious values, social attitudes and behaviour.’

1.7.5 Moral reasoning

Kohlberg's theory about the development of moral reasoning in Kuther & Higgins-D'Alessandro (2000) suggests that the individual progresses through stages of reasoning capacity. These stages are grouped into 3 levels of moral reasoning, which represent the relation of the self to the conventions of society. At the preconventional level the individual views rules as something external to, and imposed upon the self. The next level is the conventional reasoning level in which the self understands the purposes of society's conventions and can identify with them. Finally, at the postconventional level of moral reasoning, the individual makes decisions based on a universal perspective of reasoning. This level of reasoning is more adequate because solutions to specific dilemmas are based on the individual's will to preserve human dignity and uphold the moral claims of all persons involved, presently and in the future.

- Kohlberg (1975: 671) states that moral reasoning is clearly reasoning. Advanced moral reasoning depends on advanced logical reasoning. Thus, an individual's logical stage determines the extent to which a person can attain a moral stage. Logical development is necessary for moral development.

1.7.6 Family functioning

There are various approaches to the study of family functioning. Some of these approaches define this construct in terms of various dimensions. These approaches will be discussed in chapter 2. For the purpose of this study, *family functioning* can be defined as the nature and qualities of interactions between the various family subsystems (parents and children), as well as the interaction between the family as a social system and external systems (e.g. school, community). The functioning of the family can be described in terms of various dimensions, including (Balk, 1995: 243-244; Epstein, Bishop, Ryan, Miller & Keitner, 1993: 146; Janosik & Green, 1992: 36; Langley, 1994: 5):

- **Family structure** which mainly depends on the formation of family subsystems and the type of boundaries around the subsystems and around individual members.
- **Affective involvement** refers to the quality of the interpersonal relationships between family members.
- **Affective responsiveness** refers to the range of affective expressiveness.
- **Communication** includes the frequency, clarity, directness and openness of communication.
- **Role definition** refers to the extent to which the roles and functions of family members are defined and mutually accepted and respected.
- **Behaviour control** refers to disciplinary styles.

- **Value transmission** refers to the transmission of ethical standards and social values to children by parents.
- **External systems** refer to the nature and quality of the family's interactions with external systems such as the school and the community.

For the purpose of the empirical part of this study, the Family Functioning in Adolescence Questionnaire (FFAQ) will be used. This instrument includes six dimensions of family functioning, namely: structure, affect, communication, behaviour control, value transmission and external systems (Langley, 1994: 1,2). These dimensions will be discussed in more detail in chapter two (section 2.5).

I expect the study to indicate a positive correlational relationship between the above dimensions and adolescents' levels of moral reasoning since the family is (in my opinion) the primary socialising unit that influences most aspects of human development, including moral development.

1.8 STRUCTURE OF PRESENTATION

Chapter Two: Literature review

This chapter will include theories as well as the factors that affect adolescent moral development. The various dimensions of family functioning will also be discussed as well as their influence on adolescent moral development.

Chapter Three: Empirical Study

This chapter will include the objectives, methodology and results of the study.

Chapter Four:

This chapter will deal with the summary of findings, conclusions, implications of the study as well as recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In their transition from childhood to adulthood, adolescents have to deal with a number of developmental tasks. "Developmental tasks refer to abilities, skills, attitudes and behaviour patterns that should be achieved at particular stages of development. They mainly present in the form of psychological challenges to be dealt with..." (Ackermann, 2001: 105). Some of the prominent tasks during adolescence are (Gouws, Kruger & Burger, 2000: 5-7; Louw, Van Ede & Louw, 1998: 388):

- the acceptance of body changes
- the development of cognitive skills and the acquisition of knowledge
- the development of an integrated gender identity
- the development of a personal identity
- the development of relative independence, responsibility and decision-making
- the preparation for a future career through exploration and decision-making
- the development of emotional control and sensitivity for the emotions of others
- the development of more permanent relationships
- the development of morals and values that serve to guide behaviour

The above point is underscored by Robins and Rutter as well as by Chisholm, Kruger and du Bois (in Bynner, 2000: 89) who assert that developmental sequences in adolescence are marked by transitions reflecting changes of state through which individuals pass as they move from childhood into adulthood. This process of developmental change includes the developmental tasks to be accomplished and the differentiation and commitment that accompany them in the construction of adult identity such as the crystallization of gender identity (Bynner, 2000: 89).

For the purposes of this study, the development of adolescent moral reasoning with particular reference to family functioning will be discussed. Firstly the theoretical approaches to adolescent moral development will be discussed. More attention will be paid to Kohlberg's theory of moral reasoning, since the moral reasoning instrument to be used in the research is based on Kohlberg's model. Secondly family functioning will be discussed in terms of the six dimensions mentioned in the FFAQ instrument. These dimensions are family structure, family communication, family affect, behaviour control within the family, value transmission within the family and external systems and the family.

Thirdly the influences that family functioning has on the moral development of the adolescent will be discussed.

2.2 AN OVERVIEW OF THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO ADOLESCENT MORAL DEVELOPMENT

2.2.1 Introduction

Children are expected to start to conform to the morality rules that society dictates as their general thinking skills develop. Psychological theories of moral development differ in their views on how moral development occurs. Freud claims that the quality of relationship the child has with his/her parent/s greatly affects the way the child develops morally. Social Learning theory, on the other hand, states that children initially learn how to behave morally through modeling (imitating appropriate adult behaviour). Still, cognitive-developmental theories claim that a child's ability to reason morally depends on his/her general thinking abilities ("Moral development in children", 2002). All of the theories, although somewhat different from each other, help us in our plight to understand moral development.

A discussion of the psychoanalytical, social learning and cognitive-developmental theoretical approaches will follow.

2.2.2 The psychoanalytical approach to the development of moral reasoning

2.2.2.1 A brief overview of the psychoanalytic approach

This approach is grounded on Freud's theory of psychosexual development. Psychoanalytical theory might be considered the first fully psychological theory of moral development (Aronfreed, 1976: 54). Freud attempted to explain the growth of personality. His theory included two important elements, namely, the development of the structure of personality (which Freud termed the *psyche*) and changes in the sexual drive (psychosexual development). He also claimed that personality consisted of three unconscious components, the id, the ego and the superego (Louw, 1992: 51).

The *id* is the first to develop and contains all the drives and psychic energy a person needs for psychic functioning. It functions via primary thought processes and operates on

the pleasure principle; that is: the immediate satisfaction of its drives, and it disregards physical and social reality.

The *ego* operates on the reality principle by using secondary thought processes such as rational thought in attempting to satisfy drives and also taking into account physical and moral reality. The *ego* is in contact with reality and therefore functions on a conscious level. The *ego* begins to develop during the first year of life and is the only part of personality which is subject to lifelong change.

“The *superego* is the moral subsystem, or conscience, of personality.” (Louw, 1992: 52) It begins to develop through the first year of life and represents the internalisation of societal values and rules because of parental praise and punishment. It therefore functions in terms of the idealistic principle, checking to see if one is conforming to the internalised values. Freud also described the lifespan of an individual in terms of respective psychosexual stages, namely: the oral, anal, phallic, latent and genital stages. These stages correspond more or less to chronological age (Louw, 1992: 52; “Moral development in children”, 2002).

2.2.2.2 Moral development in terms of the psychoanalytic approach

Freud was of the belief that moral development began in the phallic stage (from about three to seven years of age), which is marked by unconscious incestuous feelings for the parent of the opposite sex. The child therefore feels jealous and hostile towards the same sex parent. This situation is known as the Oedipus complex for boys and the Electra complex for girls. The child deals with these hostile feelings and the fear of being punished by the ‘rival parent’ by developing the *superego* through identification with the same sex parent. By identification, the child experiences the process of becoming like the parent by taking on the attitudes and ideas of the parent, thereby identifying with society’s norms (Davenport, 1988: 178-179; Louw, 1992: 54-55).

In terms of the Freudian model, adolescence is marked by the *superego* or conscience assuming a special significance as children become individuated from their parents and develop their own moral standards for judging behaviour. During childhood, the *superego* influences the child’s behaviour by producing feelings of guilt over actions that violate the parents’ values. During adolescence however, the *superego* becomes ‘re-externalised’, which in essence means that the parental values which were automatically adopted during childhood, become consciously experienced and can thus be evaluated and tested. Thus

adolescents become increasingly aware of the contradictions in society after having lost the security of childhood superego, which functioned simplistically, having judged acts as right or wrong on the basis of parents' values. Consequently, one of the primary tasks of adolescence is to re-evaluate the standards of the superego. This process is known as individuation and involves the rejection of parental values at times, thus allowing the adolescent to develop his or her own conscience after carefully examining its childhood contents. The superego therefore adopts values that are unique to the individual.

Psychologists such as Marcia, Loevinger and Erikson subscribe to Freud's theory that the individual's ego undergoes important transformations during adolescence. However, they also contend that environmental factors contribute greatly to the adolescent's ego development. They therefore try to identify the socio-cultural factors that influence an adolescent's moral reasoning and also try to describe the characteristic behaviour associated with the different stages of ego development (Louw, 1992: 410; Nielsen, 1987: 585-586). Recent psychoanalytic ideas highlight the importance of the caregiver and infant relationship. Emde suggests that emotional and sensitive interactions between the caregiver and the child stimulate the attachment bond and are thus vital for acquiring moral standards ("Moral development in children", 2002).

2.2.3 The social learning approach to the development of moral reasoning

Social learning theorists are of the view that human behaviour is shaped through reinforcement, punishment and modeling. Parents and other significant adults serve as models for the child to imitate, consequently shaping his or her moral behaviour. In this manner values, which include cultural norms, are transmitted. Moral beliefs center on social 'virtues' such as cleanliness, truthfulness, punctuality and other good behaviours (Clarke-Stewart & Koch, 1983: 328; Louw, 1992: 410; Nielsen, 1987: 587). Kohlberg (1976: 48) suggests the following apt description of environmental influences on moral development in terms of social learning theory by stating that 'environmental influences on normal moral development are defined by quantitative variations in strength of reward, punishment, prohibitions, and modeling of conforming behaviour by parents and other socializing agents.'

Social learning theorists contend that human behaviour is both lawful and predictable and that an adolescent's behaviour depends on the types of rewards or punishments to which he or she is exposed. An adolescent's moral decisions are primarily determined by the

consequent rewards or punishments that would possibly apply at a given point in time, rather than on a stage of moral reasoning (the cognitive-developmental approach) or a well-developed superego (the psychoanalytic approach). Thus, moral behaviour varies according to the situation. For example, a student may cheat in an examination if the benefits of cheating (such as passing a course) outweigh the risk of punishment. Social learning theorists also contend that the criteria adolescents use to judge behaviour as moral or immoral are derived from their community's particular standards. Therefore, adolescents differ in terms of their conceptions of right and wrong. Thus, conduct, which may be considered immoral in one culture, might be ignored or even appreciated in another culture. Through modeling, reinforcement and punishment, children learn to distinguish acceptable from unacceptable behaviour. In a similar manner, they learn which moral principles are acceptable to their community (Nielsen, 1987: 587).

Social learning theorists are thus interested in the conditions under which different moral decisions occur. They concur with cognitive theorists by attributing changes in adolescents' moral reasoning to their increased cognitive maturity as well as their social experiences. The expanding cognitive abilities of adolescents interact with their experiences creating more refined moral reasoning. They thus get a better understanding of the relationship between their behaviour and the consequences. Adolescent moral decisions are also influenced by their observations of others receiving rewards or punishment. Individuals tend to emulate behaviours that are rewarded, although the particular characteristics of the person being rewarded may enhance that person's appeal as a role model. For example, an adolescent who enjoys sport is more likely to model his or her behaviour on that of a famous athlete rather than a great painter. Adolescents are most likely to model their moral decisions on those of people whom they know personally and those with high prestige or status in society. Nurturant and supportive adults are also more likely to become adolescents' models than those who are critical and distant. Social learning theorists contend that guilt feelings arise in adolescents as a consequence of the conditioning they receive from society in regard to appropriate and inappropriate thoughts and acts. Thus, instead of a conscience, adolescents are directed by the sanctions and values that they have internalized from their society (Nielsen, 1987: 587-588). Adams (in Louw, 1992: 410) is of the view that adolescents no longer readily accept the values they had learnt from their parents (and significant other adults) as children. Adolescents first evaluate these values and rely on the support of their peers, because of the increasing interaction with them.

2.2.4 The cognitive-developmental approach to the development of moral reasoning

2.2.4.1 Introduction

Whilst psychoanalytic and behavioural (social learning) theories respectively dominated the study of human development in the first half of the twentieth century, cognitive-developmental theory has dominated the field more recently. This theory contends that peer interactions were primary in fostering moral maturity in children. In contrast the other two theories accorded parents a considerable if not exclusive role in their children's moral socialization, although the means differed ('namely children's identification with the same-sex parents versus their susceptibility to conditioning by powerful models') (Walker, 1999: 261). Cognitive developmental theorists claim that a child's ability to reason morally depends on his or her level of general thinking abilities ("Moral development in children", 2002).

Kohlberg (1976: 48) suggested the following common assumptions of cognitive-developmental theories:

- Moral development has a basic structural or moral judgmental component.
- Morality arises from a generalized motivation for acceptance, competence, self-esteem or self-realisation, rather than for meeting biological needs and reducing anxiety or fear.
- The major aspects of moral development are culturally universal, since all cultures have common sources of social interaction, role taking and social conflict, which require moral integration.
- Basic moral norms and principles are structures that arise from social interaction experiences, rather than through the internalization of rules that exist as external structures. Moral stages are thus not defined by internalized rules, but by structures of interaction between the self and others.
- Environmental influences on moral development are defined by the general quality and extent of cognitive and social stimulation throughout the child's development, rather than by specific experiences with parents or experiences of discipline, punishment and reward.

A discussion of the three main exponents of cognitive-developmental theoretical approach to moral development, namely; Dewey, Piaget and Kohlberg, will follow.

2.2.4.2 John Dewey's model of moral development

John Dewey was the first scholar to fully state the cognitive developmental approach. He postulated three levels of moral development (Kohlberg, 1975: 670):

- level one: the pre-moral or pre-conventional level of behaviour 'motivated by biological or social impulses with results for morals.' (Kohlberg, 1975: 670).
- level two: the conventional level of behaviour, during which the individual accepts the standards of his group with little critical reflection.
- level three: the autonomous level of behaviour, during which conduct is guided by the person thinking and judging for himself or herself about what is good, and does not accept the standard of his group without reflection.

2.2.4.3 Jean Piaget's model of moral development

Jean Piaget was the first scholar to define stages of moral reasoning by building on his prior knowledge of cognitive stages. He was also the first to provide a comprehensive study of children's moral reasoning. Piaget observed children playing games in an attempt to study their rule-following and rule-breaking behaviours. He also held interviews with them about the rules of the games they played so that he could understand their strategies. Using his findings and borrowing some of Dewey's ideas, he constructed a three-stage model of moral judgement. His model was as follows:

- The premoral stage, during which children younger than four years of age show no sense of obligation to obey rules.
- The heteronomous stage: Children of roughly ages four to eight years, obey rules and submit to authority. Rules and regulations are seen as fixed and absolute (they are taken at face value). This is known as *moral realism*. Children consider rules to be unchangeable because adults or some higher authority pose these rules.
- The autonomous stage: Children of roughly ages eight to twelve years are more flexible in their reasoning than younger children. Piaget observed that the moral reasoning of preadolescents shifts from blind obedience to considering the motives and intentions of people. This is called *moral relativism*. During this stage children take into account the consequences of following or breaking rules. They also express more flexible opinions and understand that rules, although important for societal functioning, can be changed and challenged when the situation requires it (Jaffe, 1998: 152; Kohlberg, 1975: 670).

Piaget was of the view that children advance (mature) from the stage of moral realism to moral relativism because of cognitive development and peer interactions (Nielsen, 1987: 574-575).

2.2.4.4 Kohlberg's theory on moral development

(i) Introduction

Kohlberg based his thinking on moral development on the studies of Dewey, Piaget (discussed above) and James Mark Baldwin. They had emphasized that human beings develop philosophically and psychologically in a progressive fashion (Barger, 2002).

Kohlberg redefined the Dewey-Piaget levels and stages through longitudinal and cross-cultural studies. He asserted that the concept of stages (as used by Piaget and himself) implied the following characteristics:

- Stages are 'structured wholes' or organized systems of thought. Individuals are consistent in level of moral judgment.
- Stages follow an invariant sequence. Movement is always forward, never backward, under all conditions, except when the individual experiences extreme trauma. Individuals also never skip a stage.
- Stages are 'hierarchical integrations.' Thinking at a higher stage includes within it lower stage thinking. There is also a preference for thinking at the highest stage available.

Each of these characteristics has been demonstrated for Kohlberg's stages of moral development (Kohlberg, 1975: 670-671).

(ii) Characteristics of Kohlberg's three levels of moral development

Kohlberg asserted that moral judgment takes place on three levels, the preconventional level (Level 1), the conventional level (Level 2) and the postconventional level (Level 3). These levels of moral development are characterized by the following:

- They are related to Piaget's stages of cognitive development. An individual must first have reached the cognitive stage of concrete operations in order to reach the conventional level of moral judgment. Similarly, the individual has to first reach the cognitive stage of formal operations before he or she can reach the postconventional level of morality.
- Reaching a particular stage of cognitive development does not ensure reaching a related level of moral development.

- An individual cannot bypass any level of moral development during his or her development.
- Not everyone reaches the highest level of moral development.
- His/her level of intelligence and socio-economic class influence the level of moral development that an individual reaches and the age at which he/she reaches it. Generally, more intelligent people who come from a higher socio-economic class achieve a higher degree of moral maturity.
- Keeping in mind individual and socio-economic differences, it can generally be accepted that Level 1 develops during childhood, most adolescents and adults only develop to Level 2, and a small percentage of adults reach Level 3.
- All cultures and subcultures use the same basic moral concepts such as love, respect, liberty and authority. All individuals, regardless of culture, go through the same stages of reasoning about these concepts. The same order, varying only in terms of how quickly and how far individuals move through the stage sequence, mark this progression in moral development. Thus, moral development is a universal phenomenon (Lickona, 1976: 9; Louw, 1992: 410-411).

(iii) Kohlberg's six-stage model of moral development

Kohlberg further defined his three-level model of moral development in terms of six stages. His model of moral development is described as follows: (Clarke-Stewart *et al.*, 1983: 317-322; Jaffe, 1998: 152-154; Kohlberg, 1976: 33-35; Kramer, 2002; Louw, 1992: 411-412; Nielsen, 1987: 575-577).

Level I: Pre-conventional level

This level of moral reasoning is a particular characteristic of most children under age nine, some adolescents and many (adolescent and adult) criminal offenders. It is mainly based on the avoidance of punishment, personal interest and the satisfaction of personal needs. At this level, the individual has not yet really come to understand and uphold conventional or societal rules and expectations. Societal conventions do not hold high priority and are not used as guidelines for moral behaviour yet. This is mainly due to limited cognitive development and concrete reasoning. This level of moral development includes two stages:

Stage 1: Heteronomous morality – Punishment and obedience orientation

At this stage the child has trouble in viewing a moral dilemma from various angles. Behaviour is evaluated in terms of its consequences only and motives are not considered.

The child obeys for the sake of obedience and because he/she obeys authority figures unconditionally. Thus, the child behaves correctly in order to avoid punishment.

Stage 2: Individualistic morality – Instrumental purpose and exchange

The child develops an awareness that different people may hold different viewpoints about a moral dilemma, but this awareness is initially very concrete. The child now feels that it is right to obey rules if it is in someone's immediate interest. Consequently it is right to behave in your own interest, and obedience to rules is primarily aimed at personal need satisfaction. There is also the expectation that if the child does something for someone else now, that person will later return the favour. Thus there is an element of reciprocity (just exchange – “I-help-you-and-you-help-me”), not loyalty, gratitude, or justice. This type of morality has also been described as ‘marketplace morality’, in which moral action involves making deals for a fair exchange.

Level 2: Conventional level

This level is mainly characterized by conforming to conventional rules, because the child (mostly during middle childhood) conforms to the social order and personal expectations as well as the expectations of others. There is mainly an external control of moral behaviour. There is thus a shift in moral reasoning from a preoccupation with satisfying one's own needs to getting along with and gaining the approval of others. Therefore expectations of parents, the group and others are supported, sustained and conformed in pursuit of healthy human relations within an orderly society. This level consists of the following two stages:

Stage 3: Morality of interpersonal expectations, relationships and conformity (“good boy/nice girl” orientation)

During this stage, good behaviour is perceived as behaviour of which other people approve and which benefits the individual. The main aim of the individual is to receive approval and to avoid criticism. The individual deems it important that his/her parents, teachers and others regard him/her as a ‘good boy/nice girl’. For the first time behaviour is judged in terms of the doer's motive.

Stage 4: Morality of social systems and conscience (The “law and order” orientation)

Most people progress to stage 4 during their adolescent years, and is the highest level attained by most adolescents and adults. There is a shift in focus of moral reasoning and

behaviour now progresses from a 'self-interest' orientation to the broader social context. The individual perceives correct moral behaviour as that associated with the performance of duty, respect for authority and the maintenance of social law and order. Society's laws may not be broken under any circumstances and behaviour is considered immoral if any societal rule or law is broken, or if anybody is harmed. Since the individual reasons from a societal perspective, individuals' interests and interpersonal relationships are considered secondary to maintaining the social order.

Level 3: Post-conventional level

This is the highest level of moral reasoning that an individual can attain. Most people will not reach this level of moral reasoning or behaviour. An individual functioning at this level internalizes values and principles, independent of values and views of other people. At this level the principle (adopted in the previous stages) that authority and laws must be obeyed automatically, is rejected. Ethical standards of conduct are determined not by subjective feelings, self-interest, social pressure, or even legal authority. Rather, human behaviour is guided by abstract (higher) principles that are universally applicable (not to one group only). There is no longer an unconditional acceptance of social and political systems; alternative principles are also considered. A personal code of moral values and behaviour becomes established, which guides behaviour under all circumstances. This level consists of the following two stages:

Stage 5: Morality of social contract, usefulness and individual rights

Individuals attaining this stage are capable of perceiving moral decisions more abstractly than was previously possible. Correct or incorrect action tends to be defined in terms of laws or rules related to general rights and standards. Such rules have a rational base, promote welfare and are necessary for the optimal functioning of society. Apart from conforming to general standards, the individual also uses personal values to distinguish between what is right and wrong. Rules can thus be changed if this change is rationally and socially justified and if the individual and society have agreed to the change. If, however, there is a difference between the individual's standards and society's established rules and laws, the latter will be accepted because of the prevailing perception that people are morally obliged to uphold society's rules.

Stage 6: Morality of universal ethical principles

This is the highest stage of morality. The individual evaluates behaviour not only in terms of society's existing norms but also on the basis of his own conscience or internalized

abstract ethical principles. The moral behaviours of people functioning at this level are guided by universal principles such as justice, equality of human rights and respect for the dignity of the individual. The individual acts according to personal, internalized principles, regardless of the views and responses of others. The person experiences guilt and condemns his/her own behaviour if he/she did not act in this manner.

(iv) Principal factors that determine an individual's level of moral development

Kohlberg proposed four principal factors that determine the extent to which a person will develop in terms of his six-stage model of moral development. These factors are (Thomas, 1997: 61):

- the individual's level of logical reasoning
- the individual's motivation
- opportunities to learn social roles
- forms of justice in the social institutions with which the person is familiar.

(v) Criticisms of Kohlberg's theory and alternative views

As is the case with any significant scientific enquiry or philosophical thought, Kohlberg's theory of moral development has been the target of much criticism.

- The hypothetical moral dilemmas Kohlberg used in his studies involved abstract problems of justice and fairness, life and death. They had little in common with the real-life problems that most adolescents face. They have no social or historical context (Jaffe, 1998: 156; Linn, 1991: 60; Walker & Hennig, 1999: 360).
- Gilligan (in Berger, 2000: 404-405; Louw, 1992) was of the view that Kohlberg's theory applied more to boys than to girls. Her studies revealed that men and women differ in their attitudes towards morality. The morality of women centers on relationships (care orientation or interpersonal connectedness) and responsibilities whilst men emphasise rules and justice more. Since Kohlberg conducted his research using male participants, his theory could have a male-bias because women could perform less well than men as a consequence of being measured by 'male criteria'. (Gump, Baker & Roll, 2000: 68; Linn, 1991: 68, 2001: 598; Louw, 1992: 345).
- Cousins (in Jaffe, 1998: 157) and Miller and Bersoff (in Gump *et al.*, 2000) are of the view that people in different cultures differ somewhat in their social and moral reasoning and may also contain a degree of ethnocentrism. This view is in contrast to Kohlberg's assumption that levels of moral development are universal. It could be that 'Kohlberg's definition of morality as a system of justice is not as appropriate for non-western as for Western societies.' (Louw, 1992: 346). A study conducted by Ferns

and Thom (2001: 46) on the moral development (in terms of Kohlberg's model) of black and white South African adolescents also found that the moral development of these two groups is influenced by differences in their historical and cultural backgrounds. Thus, it seems as if Kohlberg's model cannot be seen as universal without taking cultural diversity into account.

- Kohlberg's model underestimated the role of emotions and social influences on moral development by placing too much emphasis on the role played by cognitive factors. Interactions with parents, peers, and teachers, do influence the individual's sense of right and wrong to some extent (Jaffe, 1998: 158; Louw, 1992: 345).
- Carpendale (2000: 202) argues that there is inconsistency in Kohlberg's theory. He claims that there is incompatibility between Kohlberg's conception of stages and his (Kohlberg's) account of the process of reasoning. Furthermore, Carpendale suggests that one of these two aspects of Kohlbergian theory need to change. This change should involve a modification of Kohlberg's conception of stages and an emphasis on the Piagetian view of moral reasoning as a process of coordinating perspectives rather than the application of principles or rules.
- Although Hall and Davis (in Rosen, 1980: 143) find Kohlberg's theory 'impressive, compelling and acceptable', they consider Piaget's model of moral development (egocentricity, heteronomy and autonomy) to be equivalent to the preconventional, conventional and postconventional levels of Kohlberg's theory respectively, and more clear than descriptions given of the six stages of his model. They are also wary of the fact that Kohlberg's ideas of moral development were not only shaped by psychology, but also by philosophy; the latter they reject.

(vi) Positive aspects of Kohlberg's model

- Although Kohlberg's theory has both strengths and weaknesses, 'it remains one of the most stimulating and potentially fertile models of moral development in current psychological and philosophical circles.' (Thomas, 1997: 65). His theory has advanced the understanding of morality. Kohlberg's theory, 'more than any other theory, moulded psychologists' thoughts on moral development.' (Louw *et al.*, 1998: 465). His theory and research give an essentially accurate formulation of moral development, despite certain limitations within the model (Rosen, 1980: 155). Nucci (2000) views Kohlberg's model as brilliant because it offers a solution to nearly every conundrum faced by moral psychology.
- Kohlberg made an important contribution in legitimizing moral enquiry as a field of scientific study (Kroger, 1997: 83). He claims that moral development is characterized

by invariant sequences and universality seems to have withstood empirical scrutiny, although development is restricted in some societies for which he has suggested reasons (Grant, 2002: 310).

- Kohlberg's six-stage model of moral development has held up well in studies involving a wide variety of children, adults and adolescents (Seifert & Hoffnung, 1997: 494). It has also stimulated further research on moral development in many countries including South Africa. Many aspects of his theory have been verified by research (Louw *et al.*, 1998: 463).
- His claim that moral development occurs alongside cognition highlights the view that moral actions may not simply be the products of the internalization of a set of rules but could also be influenced by the individual's level of cognitive development (Grant, 2002: 310). Kohlberg emphasized the fact that 'wrong' does not have one meaning and that appropriate moral course has different meanings for different people (Grant, 2002: 310). His "unique and laudable contribution to the study of morality has been his descriptions of how ordinary human beings actually reason about rights and duties." (Gardner, 1983: 18).
- Kegan (in Kroger, 1997: 101) believes that Kohlberg uncovered a way to tap personality organization at the very root of moral meaning-making.
- Kohlberg's model of moral development has had significant implications for moral education (Duska & Whelan, 1975: 101).
- Kohlberg's stage theory of moral development has implications for theology. An application of his theory to the story about God dealing with ancient Israel, suggests a rational explanation for God's actions which may seem unduly severe from our perspective. His theory is also relevant in current discussions of the gospel, the atonement, the Law and God's true character (Aggelia Internet Publishing, 2002).
- Gilligan's critiques (mentioned earlier) have not found empirical support (Grant, 2002: 310).

2.2.5 A synthesis of the above-mentioned approaches to moral development

The different theories emphasise different aspects of the process of moral development. The psychoanalytic approach focuses on moral feelings and emotions. Moral development in terms of this approach is sometimes referred to as the development of the conscience or superego and is based on the concept of identification as described in Freud's theory of personality. Social learning theory views moral behaviour as behaviour that is learnt like any other behaviour. Significant factors in this development are the social situation and the context wherein behaviour takes place. Modeling or observational

learning is a significant manner through which moral learning occurs. The cognitive-developmental perspective considers the individual's understanding (cognition) of a situation an important factor in his/her moral development. These different perspectives on moral development are valued for the contribution they make towards a greater understanding of moral development. Furthermore, fully developed morality is characterized by: recognition and sensitivity to a given situation, which leads to awareness of the moral problem, moral judgment in order to determine the type of action to be taken in a given situation, values that influence the plan of action in accordance with moral ideals and the implementation of moral actions in accordance with specific moral aims (Louw *et al.*, 1998: 372-373). For the purposes of this study, the cognitive-developmental approach is the focus of attention.

2.3 FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE MORAL DEVELOPMENT DURING ADOLESCENCE

A number of factors could influence the moral development of adolescence. The discussion below addresses some of these factors (Gouws, Kruger & Burger, 2000: 106-110; Louw, Van Ede & Louw, 1998: 466-468). The role of the family in the moral development of the adolescent will be discussed under 2.6.

2.3.1 Cognitive development

It seems as if moral development is closely linked to cognitive development. They may in fact be parallel processes, as contended by Piaget and Kohlberg. Some examples of the interaction between cognitive and moral development are:

- Decentration (as opposed to egocentrism), which is the ability of the individual to consider various viewpoints and different values in order to reach a personal individual decision.
- The abilities to formulate, investigate and test hypotheses, to make certain deductions and to think abstractly, enable adolescents to consider alternative values and to evaluate them rationally.
- Moral values (such as fairness and justice) involve abstract concepts that can be understood and explored in a rational manner by means of abstract thinking that develops during adolescence.
- The formal-operational level of cognition (which is usually achieved during adolescence according to Piaget's theory of cognitive development) enables individuals to consider, interpret and compare social issues as well as issues

concerning morality in ways that are not possible on a concrete-operational level during middle childhood.

2.3.2 The role of the peer group

The peer group plays a critical role in the development of the adolescent's value system. Adolescents spend much time with their peers. This affords them the opportunity to develop skills, which enable them to assume roles (Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 109). Piaget (in Louw *et al.*, 1998: 467) was of the view that adolescent interaction with peers often entails confrontation with different moral viewpoints. This may encourage moral development. Studies confirm that adolescents often progress to higher stages of moral development when they have opportunities to discuss moral issues (Berkowitz & Gibbs in Louw *et al.*, 1998: 467).

Peer interaction is also significant in assisting the adolescent towards autonomy in moral thinking since the individual may have to defend his or her own view instead of merely accepting the views and values of peers (Louw *et al.*, 1998: 467). Brown (in Berger, 2000: 516) supports this viewpoint and views peers as a sounding board for exploring and defining aspirations and values. By exploring viewpoints about philosophies and attitudes about themselves and the world, with others who are willing to listen, argue and agree, adolescents begin to discover values that are best for them. Theorists such as Piaget and Kohlberg contend that peers are better able to provide appropriate actions to stimulate moral growth than parents. This is primarily because of the parents' position of unilateral authority. In contrast peers enjoy relatively equal developmental status and mutual relationships marked by co-operation (Walker, Hennig & Krettenauer, 2000: 1033).

2.3.3 Religion

Hauser (in Louw *et al.*, 1998: 467) contend that the attitudes of adolescents towards religion affect their moral development and behaviour. Thus, religious youth in comparison to non-religious youth show greater moral responsibility, experience more security and identify largely with parental attitudes and values. There is also less premarital sexual intercourse, alcohol abuse and drug abuse in religious youth than there is in their non-religious counterparts.

2.3.4 Socio-economic status

Research conducted by Snarey (1985) confirmed Kohlberg's views that middle class individuals reach higher levels of moral reasoning than persons from lower socio-

economic classes do. However a South African study (Tudin *et al.*, 1994) already mentioned in chapter one, found that 50% of the participants from lower socio-economic classes functioned at stage 5 of Kohlberg's theory of moral development. This could be explained by the fact that exposure to political and social complexities may overshadow the effect of socio-economic class (Louw *et al.*, 1998: 468). Therefore, one needs to remember that the level of socio-economic status is not necessarily related to a particular level of morality. One should therefore be wary of making stereotypical generalisations such as the stereotype that middle class individuals have a higher level of morality than working class individuals.

2.3.5 The role of the community

Some scholars contend that moral development can be influenced by cultural factors in one's community. The interaction of the individual's cognitive level of development, motivation and the socializing agents in a culture determine the level of moral development. Bronfenbrenner and Garbarino (in Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 115) describe three levels of moral development that are similar for individuals of all cultures:

- Level one (amoral): the individual being motivated to seek pleasure and to avoid pain, with moral judgment involving self-interest, characterizes this level. This level of moral development is quite normal for very young children but is considered deviant for the individual and hazardous for the individual's society if it persists into adolescence and adulthood.
- Level two (system of social agents): at this level the individual's motivation stems from allegiance to others and he/she behaves in a manner as to gain approval. This level corresponds with Kohlberg's first four stages of moral development.
- Level three (values and ideas): at this level the individual has his/her own personal system of beliefs and principles and does not depend on other socializing agents for direction. This level corresponds with stages five and six of Kohlberg's model of moral development.

Bronfenbrenner and Garbarino (in Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 115) are also of the belief that exposure to a variety of settings and social agents with different expectations and moral sanctions, causes inner conflict within the individual. Consequently the individual has to reflect on his/her inner turmoil and seek moral convictions with which he/she is comfortable. The individual needs to be able to think abstractly, speculate and make decisions in dealing with this conflict. Individuals within a homogenous social environment are less likely to experience conflict since they are exposed to one set of rules only.

However, in pluralistic societies, individuals are exposed to many socializing agents with different values. There are thus more likely to achieve level-three moral judgment than those in monolithic societies.

2.3.6 The role of the media

Media in its different forms plays a significant role in the lives of adolescents in industrialized countries and increasingly in traditional cultures as well. Adolescents in industrialized countries spend about eight hours a day interacting with the various media forms. Young people use media for various reasons such as entertainment, identity formation, high sensation, coping and the identification with youth culture (Arnett, 2001: 392).

2.3.6.1 Television

Television may have a significant effect on the value systems and behaviours of adolescents. These effects could be positive or negative depending on the programme being viewed. Research on the influence of television viewing on adolescent aggressive behaviour has had mixed results. Television programmes most popular to adolescents involve a high proportion of content involving sexuality. Generally these shows emphasise the importance of physical appearance and promote a 'recreational' attitude towards sex (Arnett, 2001: 392). Television advertisements do have some positive effects such as promoting anti-smoking and anti-drug sentiments. However, they also have negative effects such as promoting superficial, 'easy' solutions to social and personal problems. Thus, happiness and contentment are associated with the use of certain products and services. This does not resemble the real world in which problems exist. Soap operas usually portray upper middle class lifestyles in which material wealth is emphasized. These programmes also contain themes involving divorce, infidelity, abortions, drug addiction, greed and dishonest ways of fulfilling desires. They do not usually emphasise positive social values (Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 111-112).

LeMasters (in Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 111) lists the following prominent values portrayed by television that may be in conflict with the values of parents:

(a) Sex

Sex is presented by television and movies on a physical level and also as 'love.' This contrasts with parental values, which usually associate sex with love and promote monogamy.

(b) Violence

Whilst parents may value non-violence many films and television programmes contain much violent content.

(c) Idealization of immaturity

Adolescents are exposed to idols that are usually immature and have gained early wealth and fame. This is in contrast to parents' attempts to instil values that lead to maturity.

(d) Materialism

Television often portrays happiness as the result of success and the attainment of material wealth. Prestigious occupations are glamourised. Parents, on the other hand, may instill in their children that success is the result of hard work and dedication.

(e) Hedonism

Adolescents are exposed to a world of fantasy, which could be used as a means of escaping life's responsibilities. Hedonism could lead to carelessness and apathy.

(f) Commercialism of the media

Making money and immediate enjoyment are emphasized instead of the value of planning for the future.

2.3.6.2 Computer games

Computer games have also been labeled as promoting violence amongst adolescents, yet little is known at this point in time about the uses that adolescents may make of these games (Arnett, 2001: 392). Strasburger (in Jaffe, 1998: 302) states that "Video games allow the modeling and practice of symbolic violent behaviour and constantly reward such behaviour. Women often are portrayed as helpless victims." Violent games have proven to be so popular that manufacturers have increased the levels of violence in computer games over the last decade. A few examples of violent computer games are: *Quake 11*, *Mortal Kombat*, *Night Trap* and *Terminator 2* (Arnett, 2001: 379).

2.3.6.3 Music

Certain types of music popular to adolescents contain lyrics that suggest the practice of undesirable social acts such as the exploitation of women, violence and racism (Arnett, 2001: 392).

2.3.6.4 The internet

The internet has opened up more opportunities for adolescents to view material or find information that may be deemed undesirable by their parents and schools (Arnett, 2001: 393).

In conclusion it could be said that although the mass media such as newspapers, magazines and television, do promote positive moral values, they also often promote negative and conflicting values. Adolescents may become confused if these values are in contrast to those taught at home and other social institutions such as the school and the place of worship.

2.4 FAMILY FUNCTIONING

2.4.1 The concept of 'family'

Traditionally families have been defined as consisting of two parents and their children. Nowadays there are many ways in which the concept *family* can be defined. It could be defined as a group, which provides for the needs of intimacy of individual members or a kinship network, which supports individuals especially in recognizing significant events, such as births, marriages and deaths. A family could also be defined as a group sharing resources, feelings, commitments and goals amongst its members. Ultimately, the family is still the basic unit of society, having the responsibility of not only performing specific functions for individual members but also for the broader society. The principal function of the family in contemporary society may still be the socialization of children (Bigner, 1998: 37-40).

Since there are many family forms in modern society; not just the nuclear family consisting of a married couple with children, an inclusive definition of the family is needed. DeGenova & Rice (1999: 2) suggest such a definition by asserting that: 'the family is any group of persons united by the ties of marriage, blood, or adoption, or any sexually expressive relationship, in which (1) the adults cooperate financially for their mutual support, (2) the people are committed to one another in an intimate, interpersonal relationship, and (3) the members see their individual identities as importantly attached to the group with an identity of its own.'

2.4.2 The different approaches to the study of families

There are various approaches to the study of families. An overview of some approaches to the study of families will ensue.

2.4.2.1 The family life cycle

This approach deals with the stages of development a family experiences in terms of qualitative changes occurring in the family over time. Although researchers agree that family life is characterized by developmental stages, they disagree on the number of stages. Thus, there are various models of the family cycle approach (Balk, 1995: 234-235). For the purposes of this study, the stage of family development that is of relevance is when the family has adolescent children at home. During this stage families typically experience strains such as financial and work-related pressures, intra-family conflicts and problems managing adolescent children. Adolescent children are also gaining greater independence from their parents at this stage (Balk, 1995: 236).

2.4.2.2 The symbolic interactional approach

This approach focuses on the way family members interact through symbols such as roles, rules, words, gestures, positions and definitions of situations. The manner in which adolescents perceive these symbols influences how they behave and interact with others. Parents and adolescents have different roles in the family and their interactions are largely shaped by their definitions of these roles. Thus adolescent responses to parental actions include their interpretations of their parents' actions. This approach therefore contends that behaviour must be seen in terms of the perceptions and expectations of other family members (DeGenova & Rice, 1999: 21-22; Heaven, 1994: 51).

2.4.2.3 Social exchange theory

This theory suggests that the maximizing of rewards and the minimizing of punishments is a significant determinant of behaviour. An adolescent may thus behave in a certain manner and not another with the hope that this might have a beneficial effect on someone else. These two-way exchanges occur in all person-to-person interactions (Heaven, 1994: 51).

2.4.2.4 The systems perspective

(i) Introduction

This approach has been the dominant approach in the study of families in recent times. This approach considers the family to be an integrated network of individuals and

relationships. It also emphasizes the interdependence of family members, who are not only interconnected but also have outside links. Thus, each member has the potential to influence other family members (within the system) as well as the immediate environment (Heaven, 1994: 51).

The family systems approach can be used to understand family functioning by understanding how each relationship within the family influences the family as a whole. The family system also consists of a number of subsystems, depending on the number of family members. Such subsystems could be the parent subsystem, the child/ren subsystem, the mother and adolescent subsystem, the father and adolescent subsystem and the sibling subsystem. Each subsystem influences every other subsystem. Thus, conflict between parents not only affects their relationship with each other but also the relationship that each parent has with the child. Also, changes that occur in any member (element) or subsystem of the family system, leads to a period of disequilibrium (imbalance) until the family system adjusts to the change. Thus, the changes that occur in children during the adolescent period, usually leads to a certain amount of disequilibrium in the family system and could be considered as normal and inevitable (Arnett, 2001: 186).

A fundamental principle in the family systems approach is that cause and effect relationships are not viewed as occurring in one direction only, rather they are seen as occurring in cycles. This is because of the interrelationships between parts within the system. Thus, an action in one part of the system is not seen as the cause of an action in another part. Actions are seen as triggers, affecting one another in cyclical, often repeated patterns. These repeated patterns can be seen as unwritten rules that govern the system as a whole (Donald, Lazarus & Lolwana, 2002: 48-49).

(ii) The different systems models of family functioning

There are various systems models of family functioning. A brief discussion of the Circumplex, the McMaster and the Beavers-Timberlawn models will follow.

(a) The Circumplex Model (Balk, 1995: 238 –242; Olson, 1993: 104-107)

This model emphasizes the adaptability, communication and cohesion present within the family system. *Family cohesion* refers to the extent of emotional attachment amongst family members and the level of individual autonomy families encourage in their members. Two cohesion extremes can develop. Excessive cohesion leads to *enmeshment* (an over-identification with the family), which produces excessive attachment and confines

autonomy. The other extreme is *disengagement*, which results in very little attachment (if any) and unlimited autonomy. *Balanced cohesion* is the ability of a family to develop attachments that promote individual development and autonomy. Individuals are able to be both connected to and independent from their families.

Family adaptability (flexibility) is the ability of the family to respond in a positive manner towards stressors. It involves the capacity of the family to change as well as to resist change. Extremes in family flexibility can also develop. On the one extreme the family resists all demands for change and on the other extreme the family cannot maintain stability, instead it shifts constantly when pressured. Effective family adaptability exists when families communicate openly, have explicit (rather than implicit) rules, display flexible parental leadership, negotiate individual expectations successfully and have mutual trust about family rules that are to be accepted and followed.

(b) The Beavers-Timberlawn Model (Balk, 1995: 245–247; Beavers & Hampson, 1993: 79-91)

This model distinguishes healthy families from dysfunctional ones. Families are described in terms of their level of functioning as optimal, adequate and severely dysfunctional families.

Optimal Families

These families are able to nourish interpersonal relationships both within and outside the family. They recognize that individual members affect other family members. They also realize that complex events are frequently misrepresented by simple explanations and promote self-efficacy whilst realizing that some things lie beyond human control. Optimal families develop clear boundaries, make a distinction between parent and child roles and promote respect for individual privacy. Parents (who work as equals) lead optimal families, listening to their children and encouraging increased decision making by their children, as the children grow older. Beavers (in Balk, 1995: 245) 'likens the notion of clear family boundaries to the functions of a living cell, which interacts with the external world while it retains individuality.'

Adequate families

Like optimal families, adequate families establish clear boundaries, respect individual privacy, and promote individual responsibility and self-efficacy. However, unlike optimal families, adequate families have weaker parent bonds, express less intimacy, negotiate

problems with more strain and emphasize control rather than love. Parents in these families have lesser attachment between them, are less sure of their authority and compensate for this authority by using their positions of power rather than looking at the reasons for having made rules and decisions. Parent-child differences involve emotional upset and blaming.

Severely dysfunctional families

These families establish either rigid or vague boundaries. Vague boundaries promote a sense of confusion and enmeshment (already discussed above). Rigid boundaries foster feelings of persecution and promote a sense of alienation from the external world. These families resist change and have poorly defined systems of control. Family communication is infrequent and unsatisfactory. The family atmosphere is 'pervasively depressed or cynical' with continual parent-child and sibling conflict because family members routinely ignore the right of the individual to make choices (Beaver in Balk, 1995: 245).

(c) The McMaster Model (Balk, 1995: 243 –244)

This model emphasizes six dimensions of family functioning. They are: problem solving, communication, roles, affective responsiveness, affective involvement, and behaviour control. These and other dimensions are discussed below under the FFAQ's six dimensions of family functioning.

The various approaches to the study of family functioning contain overlapping as well as complementary information about the manner in which families function. This rich well of knowledge will be referred to as each dimension of family functioning is briefly discussed below.

2.5 MAJOR DIMENSIONS OF FAMILY FUNCTIONING ACCORDING TO THE FFAQ

2.5.1 Family structure

Families are organized in a structural manner that governs how family members relate to one another, when they relate and with whom. Family structure reflects family functioning by controlling the space and closeness between family members. It establishes consistent interactional patterns that help to control tension levels within the family. Family structure therefore makes some degree of family stability and predictability possible. Family structure changes in sync with the changes occurring within the family,

such as when members enter or leave the family unit or when members progress through their individual life cycles (Janosik & Green, 1992: 36).

Family structure includes characteristics such as leadership, roles, parent-child relationships, parental bonds, and boundaries - both internal and external (Langley, 1994: 4).

The different subsystems of the family are separated by boundaries. These are invisible lines that separate the various subsystems and also the family system from the external environment such as the community (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 1998: 32). Walsh (1993: 28) defines boundaries as 'the rules defining who participates how - function to protect the differentiation of the system.' For effective family functioning boundaries must be clear and firm, yet flexible enough to facilitate interchange between autonomy and interdependence. Both of these aspects are necessary for the promotion of the psychosocial growth of members, for the maintenance of integrity of the family system and for restructuring in response to stress.

The ability of a family to deal with expected and unexpected changes is directly linked to the establishment of clear roles within the family. Healthy families are able to establish clear, yet flexible roles that enable them to carry out family functions. Making decisions on work roles inside and outside the home is an important family task (Peterson & Green, 2002).

A study conducted by Penick and Jepsen (1992) on family functioning and adolescent career development found that functions maintaining the family system may contribute more to the career development experiences of the adolescent than relationship factors. They also found that adolescents from enmeshed families experience difficulty in mastering career development tasks because they cannot differentiate between their own and parental expectations and goals. Adolescents from disengaged families may also be unable to master career development tasks because of the lack of familial support and interaction, which results in limits on self-knowledge and task orientation. The results of the study thus suggest that family functioning is predictive of adolescent career development.

The family plays a significant role in shaping adolescent behaviour, although there are other influences such as peer groups. Adolescents learn from their parents by observing

and imitating them. Thus, parents serve as role models (Heaven, 1994: 53). Smetana (1995: 238) suggests that parents retain moral authority in the family throughout adolescence since adolescents rarely challenge the moral authority of their parents.

The relationship between parents and their children needs to be renegotiated at each stage of the family life career as parents respond to the changing developmental needs and demands of their children. The adolescent child needs to renegotiate this relationship in order to achieve individuation within the family system. This desire of the adolescent may threaten the cohesion of the family as a system. However, the renegotiation of rules and patterns that govern the parent-child microenvironment is a positive action in maintaining a healthy family system. It is therefore important for parents to accept and support the emerging personal identity of their adolescent children, even if it may differ from parental expectations (Bigner, 1998: 370, 372). The family provides the vital function of cohesion, which establishes the conditions for identification and fosters closeness. Too much closeness amongst family members entangles the adolescent in his or her family whilst inadequate closeness creates a sense of detachment among family members. Studies also indicate that the ability of families to facilitate social relatedness (connectedness) and individuality significantly affects the identity status of the adolescent (Gullotta, Adams and Markstrom, 2000: 169, 172). A study by Smart, Chibucos and Didier (1990: 225) on adolescent substance abuse suggests that adolescents who perceive their families to be too high or too low on cohesion and adaptability appear to be vulnerable to the use of substances as early as the ninth grade.

In their pursuit of their independence from their family, adolescents still seek the family's continued emotional support and guidance. Parents seem to play specific roles in their relationships with adolescent offspring. Fathers are perceived to be the enforcers of family and societal values whilst mothers are seen to be supportive, using reason rather than discipline in their interaction with adolescent children (Youniss & Smoller in Gullotta et al., 2000: 168). It thus seems as if adolescents seek advice more often from their mothers than their fathers (Greene & Grimsley in Gullotta et al., 2000: 168).

Studies indicate that the positive self-esteem of adolescents seems to be linked to the happiness of their biological parents. This seems to support the view that the degree of conflict within the family is more influential on adolescent development than the actual family structure (Heaven, 1994: 66).

Fleeson (in Nielsen, 1996: 289) is of the view that the relationship that adolescents have with their parents, step-parents and peers is linked to the nature of their parents' marriage. Those adolescents whose parents enjoy good marriages are more flexible, more adaptable, and have more self-control than those living with unhappily married parents. They also express less hostility, less cynicism, less impatience and less rigidity than their peers whose parents do not relate well to each other (McDonough & Cooper in Nielsen, 1996: 290). Happily married parents contribute greatly to the social, academic and psychological well being of their adolescent offspring. Thus, adolescents being raised under such conditions usually have fewer social, psychological and academic problems than peers raised by unhappily married adults (Nielsen, 1996: 290). One study indicated that parents who enjoyed a good marital relationship, their children were emotionally healthy, even if one of the parents had an unsatisfactory emotional state (Epstein, Bishop & Baldwin in Balk, 1995: 244).

Research shows that unhappily married parents tend to react negatively towards one another and towards their children (Nielsen, 1996: 290). This has a negative effect on their children's development. Under such conditions, fathers tend to become withdrawn, or become overly critical or overly punitive. On the other hand, the unhappily married mother tends to overly criticize the way in which her husband relates with his children, often openly mocking or disagreeing with him. Thus, fathers in unhappy marriages find it difficult in establishing close ties with their children. Therefore, marital happiness is a good predictor of the extent to which fathers will become involved in the lives of their children.

Hinde & Stevenson, and Minuchin & Nichols (in Nielsen, 1996: 290) believe that under unhappy marital conditions the mother is likely to seek intimacy with one of her children which could lead to a reversal of roles with the child, by making the child become her confidante, best friend or counselor. This over involvement in the lives of their children often leads to the child (or more than one child) teaming up with the mother against the father.

2.5.2. Communication within the family

Communication is characterised by factors such as clarity and directness, listening skills, negotiation, problem solving and decision-making (Langley, 1994: 5).

Communication can be defined as 'the exchange of information within a family' (Epstein, Bishop, Ryan, Miller and Keitner, 1993: 146). Barnes and Olson (in Van Heerden, 1995: 32) perceive communication as the facilitating dimension of family functioning since it forms the basis for the functioning of the other dimensions. The family system needs clear, direct and congruent communication for optimal family functioning. Satisfactory communication does not only include positive feedback, but also opportunities for family members to differ from one another (Stapelberg; Van Heerden in Van Wyk, 1998: 6). In healthy family functioning verbal as well as non-verbal messages are congruent, and any misunderstandings are explained. On the other hand, in dysfunctional families communication often entails ambiguous messages with family members often not differing from one another because that would threaten the security of the family (Raath in Van Wyk, 1998: 6-7).

A number of studies have indicated that communication patterns in families strongly influence identity development and social adjustment. Communication behaviours involving clarification, valuing and promotion facilitate individuality. Expressions of self-absorption assuming intention, and being judgmental are behaviours that constrain individuality. Communication behaviours that involve agreeing, prompting and cooperation facilitate social relatedness (which in turn involves sensitivity and respect for others and the promotion of a sense of belonging). On the other hand, behaviours such as rejection, intolerance and disagreement constrain connectedness (Gullotta *et al.*, 2000: 171-172).

Positive family communication is a crucial pre-condition for healthy family functioning. Healthy communication probably has a positive influence on the adolescent's level of independence and self-esteem. It also promotes the development of positive identities and higher levels of social and coping skills in adolescents (Noller & Callan 1991: 41, 61). Barnes and Olson (in Heaven, 1994: 57) maintain that 'families with high levels of communication show more cohesion, adaptability and satisfaction.' Since parents are a vital source of information to adolescents, communication between the two groups is vital (Heaven, 1994: 53).

Family interactions that are characterized by hostile, coercive exchanges interfere with effective problem solving activities. This delays the resolution of disputes, heightens disagreements and weakens parent-adolescent relationships. It could ultimately have a negative impact on adolescent development (Conger, Reuter & Conger, 2000: 216).

A study conducted by Barnes & Olson (in Balk, 1995: 242) indicated that differences exist in the perceptions that adolescents and their parents have about communication in families. Parents view communication with adolescent offspring to be more open and less problematic than adolescents do. Mothers and adolescents perceive communication between them to be more open and positive than communication between adolescents and fathers. Inter-parental conflict raises the stress levels of adolescents, which in turn is likely to negatively impact on their adjustment and academic performance (Heaven, 1994: 66).

2.5.3 Family affect

Family affect refers to characteristics such as expressiveness, affirmation/acknowledgement of others, trust, empathy and emotional security (Langley, 1994: 4).

Family affect also refers to the range and frequency of emotions that are expressed within the family. Family affect can be explored in terms of affective responsiveness and affective involvement. Epstein *et al.* (1993: 149-150) define *affective responsiveness* 'as the ability to respond to a given stimulus with the appropriate quality and quantity of feelings.' In the family context, it refers to the ability of members to respond emotionally to other family members in an appropriate manner. Feelings such as love, tenderness, joy, fear and anger need to be shared and experienced by families. The inability to do so may restrict or even distort families emotionally. *Affective involvement* is 'the extent to which the family shows interest in and values the particular activities and interests of individual family members.' (Epstein *et al.*, 1993: 150-151). Both over-involvement and under-involvement are patterns of behaviour that could pose problems for the family. Expressing interest in and valuing the activities of other family members is essential for healthy family functioning.

Latitude in individual expressions and differences is necessary to ensure a healthy functioning system. This is especially significant in households with adolescent offspring, as they explore their sense of identity. Thus, the difference between healthy family systems with adolescents and those that are unhealthy is the ability of healthy families to resolve differences in a manner that still maintains satisfactory relations amongst individuals (Bigner, 1998: 369-370).

Developmental researchers are beginning to include family context as an important factor in the course of parent-adolescent conflict (Conger *et al.*, 2000: 216). They identify emotional closeness and trust amongst family members as an important precondition for the successful resolution of disagreements.

Whilst mutual love and affection and complementary feelings of dependency bind family members together, the presence of mutually accepted moral prohibitions and requirements on their conduct toward each other reinforces these natural bonds (Deigh, 1996: 11). In my view, this contention suggests that a reciprocal rather than a causal relationship exists between affect and the mutually accepted moral standards within a family.

The views stated above imply that parenting styles and child-rearing practices have an important effect on the social and emotional development of adolescents (Heaven, 1994: 53).

2.5.4 Behaviour control within the family

Behaviour control is characterised by aspects such as discipline, democracy, protection, sexuality and balance (Langley, 1994: 5).

Epstein *et al.* (1993: 151-152) define behaviour control as 'the pattern a family adopts in handling behaviour in three areas: physically dangerous situations; situations that involve the meeting and expressing of psychobiological needs and drives; and situations involving interpersonal socializing behaviour both between family members and people outside the family.' They describe four styles of behaviour control based on variations of the standards (or rules) set by families in these three areas and the latitude they permit around these standards. The four styles of behaviour are:

- (i) Rigid behaviour control in which standards are narrow and specific for the culture, with minimal negotiation or variation across situations.
- (ii) Flexible behaviour control where standards are reasonable and opportunities exist for negotiation and change, depending on the context.
- (iii) Laissez-faire behaviour control where (at the extreme) no standards are maintained and total latitude is allowed regardless of the context.
- (iv) Chaotic behaviour control where there is unpredictable and random shifting between the other styles. Consequently, family members do not know what standards apply at any one time and how much negotiation is possible.

Flexible behaviour control is viewed as the most effective and chaotic behaviour control as the least effective style.

Parents of adolescents face the difficult challenge of finding the balance between supporting the adolescent in his or her individuation process and also ensuring that certain limits and boundaries are maintained for appropriate behaviour (Bigner, 1998: 369). The family provides the important function of adaptability. Through this function the adolescent learns how family power can change, how role relationships develop and how relationship rules are formed. Adolescents who experience rigid (low adaptability) family behaviour are likely to internalize a rigid interaction style, whilst too much adaptability can lead to a chaotic style. Studies also indicate that social adjustment and healthy personality development are largely influenced by the ability of the family to establish appropriate relationship intimacy and to tolerate differing viewpoints and expressions (Gullotta *et al.*, 2000: 170-171).

Collins, Gleason and Sesma (in Gullotta *et al.*, 2000: 174) are of the view that the development of behavioural self-regulation amongst adolescents emerges from a parent-adolescent relationship that encourages individuation (expressing one's own viewpoints) and connectedness (feeling love and bondedness within the family). They support this view by concurring with Baumrind's view that an authoritative parenting style is predictive of greater maturity and social responsibility. They also note that neglectful parenting (associated with few expectations, low involvement, parent-centered attitudes and unresponsiveness) is associated with antisocial behaviours and low levels of achievement and maturity. It thus seems as if the authoritative parenting style promotes the internalisation of self-regulation by encouraging social responsibility, caring and supportive interpersonal behaviours. In contrast neglectful parents discourage the development of internalisation because of their self-absorption and lower responsibility towards their children.

Family and adolescent behaviours influence each other. Effective parenting occurs when there is shared decision-making, discussions about controversy and mutual clarification on issues. In this manner adolescents' self-regulation and internalisation 'become a joint process in establishing and accepting standards of conduct, with parents encouraging compliant behaviour but remaining open to discussions about the nature and meaning of these standards. Again, Baumrind's evidence supports the effectiveness of authoritative parenting.' (Gullotta *et al.*, 2000: 174). Both family and peer relationships influence the

adolescent's behaviour regulation. Particular parenting styles are related to certain behaviours and predispositions, which in turn, guide adolescents to particular peer groups. Peer group norms then reinforce behaviours. Thus family relationships support specific personality characteristics. These characteristics then encourage adolescent contact with particular peer groups. In a manner the feedback loop is completed by the peer group, which reinforces the original socialising behaviours that were acquired by the family (Gullotta *et al.*, 2000: 174).

2.5.5 Value transmission within the family

Value transmission entails aspects such as ethical values, religious values, significance of life and achievement orientation (Langley, 1994: 6).

Havinghurst (in Van Wyk, 1998: 7-8) contends that the most important developmental task of the adolescent is to gain an own identity and value system. The family's socialising patterns has a great influence on the development of the adolescent's value system. The transfer of parents' values to children occurs when children identify with parental values and consequently internalise them. This internalisation usually occurs when parents are consistent in their value system and are open to the views of their children (Kasser, Ryan, Zax & Sameroff in Van Wyk, 1998: 8).

Heaven (1994: 53) emphasises the above contention by stating that "parents transmit their values and morals to their children. This includes general belief systems about what constitutes acceptable behaviour." Montemayor (in Gullota *et al.*, 2000: 168) contends that 'well-functioning adolescents have warm relationships with their parents who exert age-appropriate control over them... [and that] adolescents in these families are likely to identify with the goals and values of their parents.' A study conducted by Zimmerman (in Papalia, Olds and Feldman, 2001: 434) found that students' goals were influenced by the goals their parents had for them as well as their beliefs about their own abilities.

Family systems become unhealthy when it is obligatory for all family members to rigidly adhere and conform, when everyone is expected to share the same beliefs, values and behaviours (Bigner, 1998: 369), or when no clear values are transmitted.

2.5.6 External systems and the family

External systems refer to the family's exchange with the external environment in their cultural, economic, community and recreational activities (Langley, 1994: 6).

The family system does not function in isolation, but it is one of the subsystems within the greater social system. For healthy family functioning it is important that there are clear but sufficiently permeable boundaries between the family and the other systems such as the school, the church and the community (Beavers in Van Heerden, 1995: 36). The family therefore influences and is influenced by the other social subsystems. Boundaries are important in maintaining positive interactions between the family and the external environment. They influence how the family deals with external agencies and the extent to which individual members are supported in the development of their personal skills in relation to educational, career, social and other spheres (Epstein *et al.*, 1993: 147).

Parents play an important role in shaping the attitudes of adolescents towards work and potential career choices (Jacobsen; Smith in Bigner, 1998: 366). Differences in social class influence the educational and career expectations that parents have for their adolescent children as well as the expectations that adolescents have for themselves (Seifert & Hoffnung, 1997: 538). Children of disadvantaged backgrounds have a better opportunity of doing well if their families have invested in *social capital*. This means that their parents invest time and effort in them and have a strong network of community support (Coleman in Papalia *et al.*, 2001: 438). Parental aspirations and financial resources influence students' aspirations and career plans. Parental encouragement is also a better predictor of high ambition amongst students than social class (Smith in Papalia *et al.*, 2001: 440).

Baumrind (in Gullotta *et al.*, 2000: 172) contends that one of the family's major functions is to encourage social competence in its offspring. This behaviour is promoted in three ways (Gullotta *et al.*, 2000: 172] namely:

- Connection, which refers to the adolescent relating to others in a warm, positive and stable manner without denying self-realisation.
- Regulation, which refers to the establishment of family rules and the provision of supervision of the adolescent's behaviour in a manner that promotes the adherence of reasonable rules, but at the same time making allowance for the adolescent to confront injustice.
- Autonomy, which relates to the family's promotion of the adolescent's self-worth and positive identity.

The failure to develop social competence in these areas is a significant reason for adolescent alienation.

Baumrind (in Gullotta *et al.*, 2000: 172) supports other studies suggesting that authoritative parenting style promotes social competence. In contrast authoritarian parenting style discourages the development of social competence. Several investigations into adolescent antisocial behaviours support Baumrind's view. However, parenting style is not the only factor that causes adolescent antisocial behaviours. Other factors such as poverty, heredity, individual temperament and social conditions also contribute to deviant behaviours amongst adolescents.

2.6 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FAMILY FUNCTIONING AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF ADOLESCENT MORAL REASONING

The last part of this chapter deals with the influence that various dimensions of family functioning may have on the moral development of adolescents.

2.6.1 The nature of the parent-adolescent relationship

The relationship that adolescents have with their parents plays a significant role in determining the extent to which the adolescent will internalize the family's moral values. In family contexts that are emotionally warm and parents are respected, there is a strong likelihood that parents will be imitated resulting in the adolescent expressing similar traits. Adolescents who experience love, care and trust learn to be considerate towards others. The reverse is also true for adolescents who experience a hostile, rejecting atmosphere, identifying with the aggressive parent and taking on those antisocial traits. Parents who promote positive moral development and the internalization of values in their children have the following characteristics:

- They offer warmth, support and positive involvement.
- They discuss disciplinary matters and rules with their children and provide explanations for their views and actions.
- They encourage their children in the decision-making process in the family.
- They facilitate moral discussion, thus promoting the development of moral maturity in their adolescent children.
- They are good role models for moral behaviour.

Research conducted by Hart, Yates, Fegley and Wilson (1995: 338) concurred with other research that parent-adolescent relationships are fundamental to the development of exemplary moral character. Adolescents displaying moral commitment had parents whom

were such good examples that they became the role models of moral behaviour to their adolescent children.

Sutherland and Cressey (in Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 106) theorized that a significant parent-child relationship that is characterized by close emotional attachment and a high frequency of contact and communication over many years has the maximum positive effect on children's moral development. The opposite is true for a negative parent-child relationship. This contention is backed by evidence that very young children have primitive moral emotions, possibly from birth, and that they do display empathy. If their innate empathetic emotions are not nurtured by their families, or if these emotions are suppressed in their families, they may grow into dangerous people, both to themselves and society (Putman, 1995).

Powers (in Grolnick *et al.*, 2002: 22) examined the behaviours of parents during family discussions of moral dilemmas. She found that the degree of cognitive stimulation in parents' discussions was not predictive of high levels of moral development in their children, but how supportive or interfering parents were during these discussions. Parents who were more supportive and less interfering had children who were functioning at higher levels of moral development.

Walker *et al* (2000: 1045) found that immature or poor ego functioning of parents and peers were negative influences on the moral development of children. Poor ego functioning is characterised by rigidity, rationalisations, insensitivity, denial, regression and the inability to tolerate ambiguity and complexity. Such behaviours do not appropriately scaffold the moral development of children.

2.6.2 The frequency and intensity of parent-adolescent interaction

Role-modeling theory contends that the extent to which a child identifies with the parent depends on the extent of the child's interaction with the parent. Thus, daughters who enjoy close frequent interactions with their mothers are likely to identify with them. The same applies to sons who enjoy similar relationships with their fathers. Frequent interaction provides the opportunities for the communication of values and norms (Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 106).

2.6.3 Types of discipline/parenting styles

Hurlock (in Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 106) is of the view that society uses discipline as one of the ways in educating children about moral behaviours that are approved by that particular

social group. Zerkowitz (in Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 106-107) mentions that discipline has a positive effect if it is:

- consistent rather than being erratic
- primarily achieved through clear verbal explanations that are aimed at developing internal controls rather than through external physical means of control
- just and fair and avoids harsh punitive measures
- democratic rather than permissive or autocratic.

The disciplinary styles of parents can be grouped into different categories. These categories are: authoritarian, authoritative, permissive, uninvolved and erratic styles of discipline. Each of these styles has an influence on the moral development of adolescents (Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 70-71; Baumrind in Louw *et al.*, 1998: 352-353, 431).

2.6.3.1 Authoritarian parents

These parents have inflexible notions of right and wrong. They expect unquestioning obedience to predetermined rules and principles under all circumstances and reject the questioning of their authority. They seldom allow discussion (negotiation) about their rules and principles, and rarely afford adolescents the opportunity to state their own views. Adolescents are not encouraged to develop as independent individuals. Satisfactory interaction and intimate communication are hardly present. Adolescents who grow up in an authoritarian home:

- tend to be unhappy, inhibited, shy, dependant, uninterested, lacking self-confidence and irritable
- usually have a lower self-esteem and inadequate social skills required for fulfilling interaction with friends
- are less self-reliant, creative, mature in moral judgment and flexible
- tend not to fare as well in school as children growing up in authoritative homes
- may have a negative view of their parents
- may experience a lack of love, care support and empathy
- often develop foreclosed identities
- may become increasingly rebellious towards this style of parenting and may express their resentment in negative, provocative challenging behaviour which could lead to serious conflict.

2.6.3.2 Authoritative parents

They set clear guidelines for their children although children are allowed freedom within reasonable limits. These parents are warm, sensitive and patient. Though nurturing, they make reasonable demands and exercise control. They encourage their children to contribute towards family discussion and decision-making. Thus, a democratic family environment is promoted in which the rights of both the parents and the children are acknowledged and respected. These parents encourage communication, listen to the viewpoints of their children and entertain negotiation to a reasonable extent. They administer discipline primarily by means of reason; aiding adolescent children to realize why certain behaviours are deemed acceptable while others are not. They attempt to understand their children's behaviours and emotional needs before making judgments and meting out punishment. Marcia (in Louw *et al.*, 1998: 431) contends that this parenting style is associated with the development of adolescent identity achievement and moratorium.

Adolescents who are reared by the authoritative parenting style:

- are usually confident, responsible and independent
- are capable of stating their own views because they know that their parents will respect and acknowledge them
- tend to have positive relationships with their parents with mutual respect evident.

2.6.3.3 Permissive parents

They take good care of their children. However, they exercise little control over their children who are expected to regulate their own behaviours. They rarely make demands on their children and offer considerable freedom with virtually no limits set (children do as they please). These parents hardly ever question the adolescent's behaviour, values and desires. Adolescents are also allowed to make their own decisions without considering the wishes, values and convictions of their parents.

Adolescents who are reared by the permissive parenting style:

- often feel vulnerable, and are not mature enough to make sensible use of their unlimited freedom
- develop a sense of uncertainty, as well as self-reliance and self-control
- appear to be selfish and lack a sense of social responsibility and appreciation for what others do for them
- often engage in socially unacceptable behaviour, such as drug abuse

- often feel a lack of guidance and involvement from parents.

2.6.3.4 Uninvolved parents

These parents are undemanding, indifferent to their children and emotionally detached from them. They do the minimum expected of them (as parents) by providing for the physical needs of their children such as food and clothes. However, they usually fail in setting long-term goals for their children. The reasons for these parents' lack of involvement with their children are varied. It could be that they generally do not have an interest in children or that they are overwhelmed by personal problems, resulting in them having too little energy to devote to their children.

Adolescents reared by uninvolved parents tend:

- to be impulsive and antisocial
- to have disturbed relationships with other people
- to be less achievement-orientated at school.

2.6.3.5 Erratic parenting style

These parents act in an inconsistent manner when exercising authority and discipline. Consequently adolescents become confused as they lack clear guidelines. This leads to insecurity, which may be expressed in rebellious, antisocial and delinquent behaviours.

Studies indicate that the different parenting styles do influence moral development in adolescence. Pratt and Deissner (in Berkowitz and Grych, 1998) reported that adolescent moral reasoning is positively predicted by authoritative parenting style and negatively by permissive parenting style. A study by Boyes and Allen (in Berkowitz *et al*, 1998) found that college students with the highest level of moral reasoning had authoritative parents whilst those with the lowest level of moral reasoning had authoritarian parents. Parikh (in Berkowitz *et al*, 1998) found that parents with higher levels of moral reasoning tended to use induction and other authoritative parenting elements. It thus seems as if authoritative parenting with its focus on supportive communication nurtures the development of children's moral reasoning.

2.6.4 The influence of the different parenting styles on adolescent moral development

The different parenting styles influence the moral development of adolescents in different ways. A brief discussion of this issue will follow.

2.6.4.1 Authoritarian disciplinary style

This parenting style involves harsh, punitive measures to control adolescent behaviour. This is contrary to the purpose of discipline, which is supposed to develop cooperation and a sense of conscience. Moral values are also forced on the adolescent child, who has to follow the wishes of his or her parents without questioning. The child may also experience parental rejection, which together with harsh punitive measures may develop the child into a hostile, uncaring and insensitive parent (Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 107). Hoffman (in Grolnick and Gurland, 2002: 22) 'showed that power-assertive parenting was associated with low moral development.'

2.6.4.2 Authoritative parents

These parents use reason, verbal explanations, approval and praise to control the behaviours of their adolescent children. Punishment is appropriate, consistent and in proportion to the transgression and the adolescent fully understands the reasons for being punished. This approach promotes the development of adolescents into obedient, socially outgoing and independent individuals who are capable of distinguishing between right and wrong and who accept responsibility for their behaviours. Authoritative parenting can also help adolescents to internalize standards that insulate them against negative peer influences and open them to positive ones (Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 107; Papalia *et al.*, 2001: 467).

2.6.4.3 Permissive parents

These parents are of the belief that their adolescents will learn from the consequences of their actions. These parents thus prescribe few (if any) rules for adolescents. Compliance with rules is rarely acknowledged and infringements are not punished. Parents do not act as role models for appropriate adult behaviours. Consequently the adolescent cannot develop a personal value system because they are not taught the difference between right and wrong. Overly permissive parents do not assist their children in developing an inner locus of control (Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 107).

2.6.4.4 Erratic style of discipline

This style of discipline is inconsistent with erratic parental expectations leading to poor moral learning, confusion, disobedience, anxiety and instability in adolescents. If parents are also harsh and reject their children, the effect is damaging and may lead to deviant and antisocial behaviour (Gouws *et al.*, 2000: 107).

2.6.5 Family communication and its influence on adolescent moral development

A study by Walker and Taylor (in Grolnick *et al*, 2002: 22) examined the parents' level of moral development and that of their children as well the way in which families discussed moral dilemmas over a two-year period. They did not find a high correlational relationship between the levels of moral development of parents and their children. The manner in which the family discussed moral dilemmas was highly related to the child's level of moral development. Children's levels of moral development increased at a faster rate in families where their parents encouraged them to express their opinions, asked clarifying questions and checked the children's understanding. In contrast, there were lesser advances in moral development amongst children whose parents were confrontational or simply gave their opinions (similar to lecturing). Holstein (in Bandura, 1991: 55) is of the view that parents' level of moral reasoning is predictive of their children's level of moral reasoning. The more developed parents' level of moral reasoning is, the more elaborate their children's moral reasoning becomes.

Whiting (1985) viewed effective communication to be a prerequisite in the development of morality. Youniss (in Whiting, 1985: 178) considers co-operative communication as important for the establishment of principles and mutual respect leading to morality.

Walker and Taylor (in Von der Lippe, 1998: 39) suggest that high levels of conflict between parents and their children may promote the development of the children's moral reasoning, provided that this conflict occurs within contexts of supportive interactions.

2.6.6 The socialization process within the family and its influence on adolescent moral development

According to Kohlberg (in Thomas, 1997: 61-62) children become socialized by learning to play the social roles displayed by people around them. This role-playing behaviour helps children to progress in moral reasoning. The extent of this opportunity therefore has an influence on a child's pace of developing morally. Kohlberg also believed that individuals who experienced high levels of reciprocity and equality in their social institutions such as their families would advance to higher levels of moral reasoning than those who experience these factors to a lesser extent in their social agencies.

Social learning theorists view moral development as a life-long process that is shaped by changes in the social environment of the individual. The social milieu and the consequences that follow actions in moral encounters influence the individual's values and behaviours. However, the experiences of the first two decades of a person's life 'are

particularly important influences on moral development since they form the basic convictions on which all subsequent moral experiences are founded' (Thomas, 1997: 87). This point underscores the important influence that the family probably has on the individual's moral development since family is usually a (if not the most) significant social agency in the first 20 years of an individual's life.

The family may also influence the individual's willingness to intellectually confront moral issues, to practice role-taking and to tolerate cognitive conflict about moral issues. The family therefore has a likely significant influence on the value the individual places on actively engaging the moral world. This 'engagement value' may consequently affect the individual's moral development through generalisation and transference to an engagement with moral issues within social environments outside the family such as the school and work (Powers, 1988: 214).

2.6.7 The influence of family affect on adolescent moral development

Walker and Taylor (in Walker, Pitts, Hennig & Matsuba, 1995: 390, 396) found that the affective quality of parents' interactions with their children was predictive of the children's subsequent moral development. In a study conducted by them using participants across the lifespan from adolescence to late adulthood, they found that the participants frequently identified family members and friends as their role models of moral behaviour. This was contrary to the researchers' expectations that famous people would be chosen as models of good morality. Walker and Hennig as well as Powers (in Walker *et al.*, 2000: 1035) considered the affective domain within both family and peer contexts to be an important factor in the moral development of the adolescent, since these relationships were important and usually consisted of a rich emotional dimension and involved a high frequency of moral dilemmas. Powers' study found that when parents provided affective support and noncompetitive sharing of ideas with their adolescent children, the adolescent levels of moral reasoning were high. On the other hand, rejection, distortion and affective conflict were associated with low levels of moral reasoning amongst adolescents. There is thus increasing empirical evidence that suggests that the parental influence on the moral development of their children is greater than Kohlberg originally assumed and that the affectional relations between parent and child influence this development (Speicher, 1992).

2.6.8 The influence of religion on moral development

Norman, Richards and Bear (1998) studied the influence that religion and religious instruction has on the moral development of children. Their findings indicate that children receiving moral religious instruction could still develop along the normal pattern of moral reasoning and it is unlikely that the encouragement of certain moral standards will negatively affect moral growth. Other findings support and expand this contention by adding that moral religious instruction may actually facilitate growth in moral reasoning. The family's religious practices may therefore affect the moral development of the adolescent.

2.7 CONCLUSION

This chapter highlighted the theoretical and empirical evidence of the relationship between family functioning and moral development in children and adolescents. There is therefore a need to study this relationship in the South African context. The empirical investigation is described in chapter three.

CHAPTER 3: EMPIRICAL STUDY

3.1 AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THIS STUDY

3.1.1 AIM

The aim of this empirical study was to investigate the development of moral reasoning during adolescence in terms of Kohlberg's theory and the relationship between moral development and family functioning.

3.1.2 OBJECTIVES

This study was undertaken with the following objectives in mind.

- 3.1.2.1 To investigate the levels of moral reasoning amongst the participants in terms of chronological age.
- 3.1.2.2 To investigate whether there were differences in the levels of participants' moral reasoning in terms of gender and age groupings within the research sample.
- 3.1.2.3 To investigate the participants' perceptions of the different dimensions of their families' functioning in terms of age and gender groupings.
- 3.1.2.4 To investigate the relationship between the various dimensions of family functioning and the participants' level of moral reasoning in terms of age and gender groupings.

3.2 HYPOTHESES

H1: There are differences in adolescents' levels of moral reasoning in terms of age.

HO1: There are no differences in adolescents' levels of moral reasoning in terms of age.

Hypothesis 1 was made because different theoretical approaches to moral development do confer on the point that children develop morally as they grow older. Freud's theory of psychosexual development contended that the moral development of children begins from an early age and continues into adolescence. During adolescence there is an increasing need for individuation as the individual develops his/her own conscience (Louw *et al.*, 1998: 459). Cognitive-developmental theorists such as Kohlberg assert that cognitive development precedes moral development. Therefore moral reasoning develops as the individual's cognitive abilities develop. Since cognitive development is related to chronological age, it is expected that older adolescents should be at a higher level of moral development than younger adolescents because their higher cognitive skills enable them to reason more abstractly (Louw *et al.*, 1998: 376). Social learning theorists

believe that the adolescent's level of moral reasoning is primarily developed by his/her social experiences, but also agree that moral reasoning develops as the individual matures cognitively (Nielsen, 1987: 587-588).

H2: There are gender differences in adolescents' levels of moral reasoning.

HO2: There are no gender differences in adolescents' levels of moral reasoning.

Hypothesis 2 was made because the possibility exists that an individual's gender could influence the type of socialization the individual experiences. Gilligan, who suggests that gender differences in moral reasoning have their roots in socialization, supports this view. Kohlberg also supports this view. He discovered that males scored higher than females on his moral scales. This was because females more than males emphasized caring and mutual obligation in their moral reasoning. Kohlberg contended that if females were given equal opportunity to employment and education, they would score just as high as males on his scales (Jaffe, 1998: 158-160).

H3: Adolescents of different ages have different perceptions of the dimensions of their families' functioning.

HO3: Adolescents of different ages do not have different perceptions of the dimensions of their families' functioning.

Hypothesis 3 was made because of the expectation that as children get older they experience their families differently. They usually assume more responsibilities, as they grow older which influences their experiences with their families. During adolescence the increasing need for individuation and autonomy may cause some tensions within the family as the adolescent tries to establish his/her own identity. This may be more evident in older adolescents than younger ones.

H4: There are gender differences in the perceptions that adolescents have about the different dimensions of their families' functioning.

HO4: There are no gender differences in the perceptions that adolescents have about the different dimensions of their families' functioning.

Hypothesis 4 was made because there may be differences in the way males and females are socialized. Socializing experiences such as role expectations, parenting styles and patterns of communication may differ for males and females of the same family.

- H5: The levels of moral reasoning that adolescents achieve correlate positively with their perceptions of functioning of their families in terms of age.
- HO5: The levels of moral reasoning that adolescents achieve do not positively correlate with their perceptions of functioning of their families in terms of age.
- H6: The levels of moral reasoning that adolescents achieve correlate positively with their perceptions of functioning of their families in terms of gender.
- HO6: The levels of moral reasoning that adolescents achieve do not positively correlate with their perceptions of functioning of their families in terms of gender.

Hypotheses 5 and 6 were made because chapter two highlights the relationship that exists between moral development and family functioning. It is therefore expected that adolescents who come from stable families where warm relations, appropriate disciplinary practices and good communication patterns exist, would have higher levels of moral reasoning. However different members of the family may have different perceptions of its functioning because they have different experiences. These experiences may be related to the roles they play in the family in accordance with age or gender. For example, older children may be expected to take on more responsibilities within the family than younger ones. Females may be expected to tolerate any tensions within the family to a greater extent than males. Therefore the possibility exists that differences in the perceptions of family functioning are related to age and gender differences.

3.3 SELECTION OF RESEARCH GROUP

For the purpose of this study, it was decided to select participants from an Afrikaans-medium secondary school population. This decision was taken because both the MOSOV and the FFAQ instruments were available in Afrikaans and would be suitable for use with this group since Afrikaans was the mother tongue of all the learners. The researcher also enjoyed good relations with the principal and staff of the school. Therefore the type of sampling used to determine the participant group was convenience sampling. Prior to the study, the principal and staff were firstly consulted on the researcher's intention to conduct the study at the school. Once they had indicated that they supported this intention, written permission was sought and granted by the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) to conduct the study at the said school.

The school where the study was conducted is situated in a predominantly working class coloured community in the Kraaifontein area of greater Cape Town. About two-thirds of

the learners are members of the community where the school is situated. The remaining one-third of the learners reside in the neighbouring rural district population. They also come from a predominantly working class background. Due to time constraints the study did not include a detailed analysis of each participant's socio-economic background. However the principal of the school reported the following generalized picture of learners' backgrounds and family situations. Most learners come from homes where both parents work. There is therefore little or no supervision of most learners after school until the parents arrive from work in the evenings. Most of the parents are blue-collar workers since they have low levels of education. Consequently they find it difficult to assist with and monitor their children's schoolwork. Most parents do not give their full co-operation with the school, with poor attendances at school functions. Gangsterism and drug abuse prevail in the generally poor community. In general the unsatisfactory socio-economic situation within the community has a negative impact on learners' attitudes towards schoolwork. Some of the learners are involved in gangsterism and drug abuse outside school.

The research group consisted of all adolescent learners of ages 13, 14, 17 and 18 years at the time the study was conducted. The research group consisted of two age cohorts, namely the 13/14-year-old group and the 17/18-year-old group with a distinct age gap of about two years between these two groups. In this manner the findings of the two age cohorts could be compared with Kohlberg's theory which suggests that moral reasoning is a cognitive-developmental process that follows an invariant sequence. The older participants therefore ought to have higher levels of moral reasoning. The research group is described in the table 3.1 per age and gender.

Table 3.1: Composition of research group

Age cohorts	Males	Females	Total
13 & 14 year old Participants	58	67	125
17 & 18 year old participants	91	80	171
Total	149	147	296

3.4 MEASURING INSTRUMENTS

3.4.1 Introduction

The following measuring instruments were used in the study:

- A revised version of the Bester's Menings oor Sosiale Optrede Vraelys (MOSOV) (Bester, 2002) was used to determine the level of moral development of the participants.
- The Family Functioning in Adolescence Questionnaire (FFAQ) was used to provide a means of assessing the psychosocial health of the family during the stage of having adolescent children. It examined adolescents' perceptions of family functioning in terms of the dimensions mentioned in chapter two.

3.4.2 Menings oor Sosiale Optrede Vraelys (MOSOV)

3.4.2.1 Introduction

Bester (1992) devised his own instrument to measure the development of moral reasoning of Afrikaans-speaking high school learners. His study involved 476 participants from the ages of 13 to 18.

His instrument was based on Kohlberg's model. It included six moral dilemmas. Each of the dilemmas dealt with a separate social theme. The themes are theft, experiments involving animals, an escaped convict, an employment issue, euthanasia (mercy-killing) and freedom of speech. The dilemmas were constructed on the basis of Rest's Defining Issues Test (DIT) but the reasons were newly developed and formulated (Bester, 1992).

The first version of the MOSOV differed from the revised version used in this study primarily in terms of the manner in which responses were scored.

3.4.2.2 The first version of the MOSOV

In the first version, the participant had to firstly decide on whether or not a social act should be performed. Once that decision was taken, the participant had to then indicate which of the 12 reasons provided for his decision were important and not important. Each of the 12 reasons had to be scored as important or not important. The reasons provided for each dilemma reflected Kohlberg's 6 stages of moral development, with stage one being the lowest and stage six being the highest stage of moral reasoning. The stages are described in table 3.2 (Bester, 1992).

Each stage of moral development was represented by two of the 12 reasons provided for each dilemma. Participants' responses were scored by assigning a score of one to a reason considered to be important and a score of zero to a reason considered not to be important. In this manner each stage of moral development was scored out of a total of

12 for each dilemma. The total scores for each stage were then collated after the participant had indicated his/her responses to all six dilemmas. For each participant the total scores of stages one and two were added to determine the extent of pre-conventional reasoning. Similarly the total scores of stages three and four were added to determine the level of conventional reasoning and stages five and six to determine post-conventional reasoning (Bester, 1992).

Table 3.2: Description of Kohlberg's six-stage model of moral development

Levels of moral development	Stages of moral development	Description of each stage of moral development
PRE-CONVENTIONAL LEVEL	1	moral actions for the avoidance of punishment
	2	moral actions involving the making of deals for a fair exchange
CONVENTIONAL LEVEL	3	morality of interpersonal expectations, relationships and conformity
	4	moral actions involving obedience to rules and laws
POST-CONVENTIONAL	5	acting in the best interest of everyone
	6	moral actions in accordance with one's own internalised principles and beliefs regardless of the views and responses of others

(a) Reliability of the first version of the MOSOV

The reliability of each stage of moral development in the first version of the MOSOV was determined by using the Kuder-Richardson-21-formula. The reliability coefficients (indicated in table 3.3) were satisfactory.

(b) Validity of the first version of the MOSOV

The validity of the instrument was determined in terms of construct and content validity. An attempt was made to ensure content validity by formulating each item in terms of a certain stage of Kohlberg's model of moral development. Care was taken to ensure that the items that were formulated reflected the underlying principles related to each stage of Kohlberg's model (Bester, 1992).

Table 3.3: Reliability of the six stages of moral development

Stages of moral development	Reliability
1	0.88
2	0.83
3	0.80
4	0.78
5	0.74
6	0.73

Construct validity was determined by calculating the inter-correlation matrix between the different stages (indicated in table 3.4 below). From the underlying theory a deduction can be made that stage one and two should have the highest correlation, since both these stages measure pre-conventional moral reasoning. The same high correlation tendency ought to occur between stages three and four as well as stages five and six. Also, stage one should have a low correlation with stage six since the former measures pre-conventional reasoning and the latter post-conventional reasoning. The correlation scores are indicated in the table below and do reflect the underlying theory describing the different stages of moral development. There is thus an indication of construct validity (Bester, 1992).

The results indicated that the instrument could be considered to be a reliable and valid measure of moral reasoning (Bester, 1992).

Table 3.4: Inter-correlation matrixes of the different stages of moral development

Stages	1	2	3	4	5	6
1						
2	0.64					
3	0.52	0.52				
4	0.49	0.33	0.62			
5	0.30	0.32	0.26	0.37		
6	0.22	0.18	0.20	0.22	0.44	

For all the correlation coefficients: $p < 0.01$

3.4.2.3 The revised version of the MOSOV

In the revised version of the MOSOV used in this study the same six dilemmas and reasons were used. The difference between the two versions was in the manner in which the participants selected the reasons related to each dilemma. Unlike the first version, participants in the current study were not asked to make a hypothetical choice about taking a particular social action or not. Instead, they had to choose the two most important reasons (one reason from Section A and one reason from section B) for taking a particular social action as well as the two most important reasons (one reason from Section A and one reason from section B) for not taking that particular social action. Each of the sections had a choice of six reasons, with each reason reflecting a particular stage of Kohlberg's model. Thus, four responses were chosen for each dilemma, with a total of 24 responses given for all six dilemmas (Bester, 2000).

Since the revised version differed from the first version of the MOSOV, reliability and the validity of the instrument would have to be measured.

3.4.3 The Family Functioning in Adolescence Questionnaire (FFAQ)

3.4.3.1 Introduction

The FFAQ was developed to assess the adolescent's perception of psychosocial functioning of the family. This instrument is based on a model that integrates family systems research and the developmental tasks of adolescents. It examines six dimensions of family functioning: structure, affect, communication, behaviour control, value transmission and external systems. Research on family systems models indicates that these dimensions play an important role in determining healthy psychosocial family functioning (Langley, 1994).

The FFAQ is also designed in terms of theory that describes the family as moving through a number of stages in its lifespan. Within this framework the FFAQ focuses on the developmental tasks of individual members, as well as the tasks of a family as a unit, during a particular life stage of the family, namely families with adolescents (Langley, 1994).

3.4.3.2 The development and standardisation of the FFAQ

This questionnaire was developed by Roelofse and Middleton (1985) and standardized on a national sample of high school students for use in South Africa by Langley (1994). The sample comprised of students from the major South African cultural groups, namely,

African, Western and Asian cultures. There was an almost equal representation of gender. High school learners from grades 8 to 12 participated in the FFAQ study. The FFAQ was administered in English to participants whose home language was English or an African language, and in Afrikaans to Afrikaans-speaking participants.

The questionnaire consists of 42 items (statements) that relate to the six dimensions of family functioning (mentioned above). Thus, seven items represent each dimension. A four-point Likert scale is used to evaluate the participant's response to each statement. For example, item 17 reads: "Punishment is fair in our family." A participant could select one of the following responses: *almost always*, *often*, *sometimes* or *hardly ever*. In this instance an *almost always* response would be rated as four points and a *hardly ever* response would be rated as zero (Langley, 1994: 6).

3.4.3.3 Reliability of the FFAQ

The internal consistency of the FFAQ was calculated by means of the Kuder-Richardson formula 8, with reliability coefficients higher than 0.88 for the total score obtained in all sub-samples. All the scales also obtained reliability coefficients higher than 0.60 for all the sub-samples. The reliability indices are indicated in table 3.5 below (Langley, 1994).

3.4.3.4 Validity of the FFAQ

Research indicated that content validity as well as the construct validity of the FFAQ is satisfactory. Furthermore, evidence for the validity of the FFAQ was suggested by significant correlations with similar measures such as the Erikson Psychosocial Stage Inventory (Langley, 1994).

Table 3.5: Reliability coefficients of the FFAQ (N = 7307).

Scales	Kuder-Richardson Formula 8
Structure	0.64
Affect	0.76
Communication	0.79
Behaviour Control	0.66
Value transmission	0.71
External Systems	0.63
Total	0.89

3.5 RESEARCH PROCEDURE

Prior to the actual study being undertaken, a pilot study was done to assess whether the research procedure posed any unforeseen problems. The pilot study was undertaken with 10 Afrikaans-speaking learners ranging in ages from 14 to 16. These learners were not members of the research population of the actual study. The pilot study revealed that the participants could comfortably work through the FFAQ but found the language in the MOSOV a bit difficult at times and could not always fully comprehend the items. Also, participants' pace of reading differed substantially and therefore the time factor in the actual study would have to be carefully considered.

A discussion with the staff at the school revealed that there was a general reading problem present in all grades and that it would be better that the MOSOV be read to the participants. This measure would also be practical in addressing the issue of time and also increasing the validity of the MOSOV since its content would be better understood by participants who had a reading problem.

The researcher conducted the study at the school during the third term of 2002. To ensure anonymity, participants were not required to state their names on the response sheets. Instead, each set of response sheets (the FFAQ and MOSOV answer sheets) was allocated its own number for the purpose of identification when processing the data (responses) later. To ensure the minimum disruption of the normal functioning of the school, it was decided to conduct the study with all classes from grades 8 to 11, in accordance with the daily the school timetable. This was done to ensure the maximum participation of 13/14- year-old and 17/18-year-old learners, since the findings of the study were to be examined in terms of these two age cohorts. For the purposes of this study the research protocols of the other age groups were not used. The Grade 12's were excluded because they were preparing for the final matric examinations. It was estimated that the study would take between 1 and 2 hours. Thus, two 50-minute periods would be sufficient to conduct the study with a class. The average class size was about 36.

Transparency copies were made of both research instruments. Each participant was allocated a separate table and chair in the classroom where the study was conducted. Each participant was also provided with an eraser, a pencil, the FFAQ item booklet, the FFAQ response page, the MOSOV booklet containing the six dilemmas with reasons and a separate MOSOV answer page.

The study was firstly conducted with grade 8 learners and progressed to the grade 11 learners. Participants were firstly fully informed of the nature of the study. The researcher stressed confidentiality and anonymity of their responses. It was emphasized that they firstly needed to check if the identification numbers on both response sheets were the same for each participant. Thereafter, they had to only furnish the following details: age, gender and grade. Names and surnames were not to be given to ensure anonymity. It was also stressed that there were no right or wrong answers and that their individual opinions were important. Participants could also erase and correct any mistakes or change their responses whenever they needed to. Participants were informed that they had to indicate their responses on the answer sheets only and not on the questionnaire booklets, since the booklets had to be re-used by other participants.

The FFAQ was firstly administered. The procedure was followed as set out in the Preliminary Manual for the FFAQ (Langley, 1994). The researcher facilitated the administration of the instrument by using visual aids (transparency copies of the instrument). The prescribed examples were done and only after it was established that every participant understood the procedure, did the study continue. The researcher read each item and allowed the participants sufficient time to indicate their responses.

A similar procedure was followed when administering the MOSOV. Time was spent to ensure that participants fully understood that there was no right or wrong answer and that individual opinions were valued. Also, time was spent on ensuring that participants understood how to complete the response sheet. The researcher using the relevant transparency read each dilemma. The researcher then read the list of alternative reasons to the participants, also from a transparency. Participants had to choose a reason and indicate their choice in the relevant block on the answer sheet. The researcher only proceeded to the next dilemma after all participants had completed their responses to the previous dilemma. The researcher did not voluntarily explain any aspects of neither the dilemmas nor the reasons given. However, given the fact that a large proportion of learners had reading problems, the researcher decided to respond to participants' questions relating to the meanings of certain terms.

At the end of the research session, the researcher thanked the participants for their time and efforts.

3.6 RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

3.6.1 Introduction

The analysis and discussion of the results (when applicable and/or practical) will be presented in terms of the various participant groupings. These groupings are the age and gender groupings as well as the entire research group. The results will be analysed and discussed in the following manner: firstly the validity and reliability of the moral reasoning instrument will be discussed, secondly the pattern of moral reasoning levels within the research group will be examined, thirdly the levels of family functioning will be dealt with in terms of the various dimensions of family functioning and lastly the relationship (if any) between levels of family functioning and levels of moral reasoning will be discussed.

3.6.2 Results relating to levels of moral reasoning

The participants' responses to the moral reasoning questionnaire represented their stages of moral reasoning in terms of Kohlberg's six-stage model of moral reasoning. These responses were then grouped into the three broader categories (levels) of moral development in terms of the Kohlbergian model. These levels in order of increasing complexity of moral reasoning are: the pre-conventional (stages 1 & 2), the conventional (stages 3 & 4) and the post-conventional levels (stages 5 & 6) of moral development. The mode as the central tendency measure was calculated to represent each participant's level of moral reasoning. The mode was that level of moral reasoning that had the highest frequency after each participant's responses to the 24 items were grouped according to the pre-conventional, the conventional and the post-conventional levels. The calculations revealed bimodal scores in certain instances. In 28 of these instances the bimodal scores represented the pre-conventional as well as the post-conventional levels. Since these levels represented opposite poles of the moral reasoning levels continuum, they could not be used for the purpose of categorising participants in terms of a level of moral reasoning. The responses of these 28 (out of 296) participants for the entire study were deleted. Consequently the research group size was reduced from 296 to 268. Its composition is described in the table below.

Table 3.6: Composition of revised research group

Age groups	Males	Females	Total
13 & 14 year old participants	53	62	115
17 & 18 year old participants	82	71	153
Total	135	133	268

A number of possible reasons could be suggested to explain the presence of 28 divergent bimodal scores that were obtained and subsequently deleted from the study. Two of these reasons are:

- Since the MOSOV instrument is based on Kohlberg's model of moral development, the criticisms leveled at Kohlberg's theory may also be applicable to this instrument. Although the content in the MOSOV related to the South African social context, the moral dilemmas were hypothetical and may not have related to the real-life problems of the participants. Therefore the participants' answers to these hypothetical dilemmas may not be a reflection of their real-life moral behaviours (Nielsen, 1996: 114).
- Different contexts may elicit different levels of moral reasoning (Nielsen, 1996: 114). This view is contrary to Kohlberg's view that moral development follows an invariant sequence and that the individual prefers thinking at the highest stage available (Kohlberg, 1975: 670-671). Thus the nature of the content as well as the manner in which it was expressed, may have resulted in participants reasoning at different moral levels. A person may organize moral thinking in two or more stages depending on the specific issues involved (Kimmel & Weiner, 1995: 166).

3.6.3 Validity and reliability of the revised version of the MOSOV instrument

3.6.3.1 Introduction

From this point onwards the six dilemmas in the MOSOV instrument will also be referred to as "stories". For the purposes of this study the construct validity and the reliability of the revised version of the MOSOV instrument was calculated by using Pearson's multiple correlation coefficient. The mode as a measure could not be used to determine construct validity and reliability because the sample size would have been reduced to 36, since in the majority of instances there was more than one modal score indicating a participant's level of moral reasoning for a particular story. Table 3.7 indicates the relationship between the total scores for each of the stories (sum of four responses representing participants' levels of moral reasoning for each story) as well as the relationship between the total scores for each of the stories and the sum total score (sum of the 24 responses representing participants' levels of moral reasoning) for all the stories together. A discussion of the construct validity and reliability of the instrument follows (refer to table 3.7).

3.6.3.2 Construct validity

For construct validity the total score for all stories (the scores of the 24 responses) were added. When inspecting the relationship of each story (i.e.: the total score of the four responses for each story) with the total score for all the stories, each story relates significantly ($p < 0.01$ for all the relations, except for the relation with story 5 with $p < 0.05$) where the correlation coefficients range from 0.42 to 0.61. Thus, it can be concluded that the six stories all measure the same construct, namely moral reasoning levels.

3.6.3.3 Reliability

The data in the last two rows of table 3.7 relates to reliability of the instrument. The split-half method was applied to assess the internal consistency reliability of the participants' responses in this study. This was done by comparing the total scores of stories 1, 3 and 5 with the total scores of stories 2, 4 and 6. The reason for grouping the scores of the stories in this manner was to diminish the effect of the exhaustion factor on the results, since the respondents could have become increasingly tired as they concentrated whilst working through the MOSOV instrument. The results indicated that although the relationship between the total scores of stories 1, 3 and 5, and stories 2, 4 and 6 was significant ($p < 0.01$), the correlation coefficient ($r = 0.27$) indicated low reliability. The coefficient of determinism: $r^2 \times 100 = 7.3\%$. This means that only 7.3% of the variance in stories 1, 3 and 5 can be accounted for in stories 2, 4 and 6. The reliability of the whole test was determined by using the Spearman-Brown formula:

$$= \frac{2 \times 0.27}{1 + 0.27} = 0.43.$$

$$1 + 0.27$$

The reliability of the MOSOV instrument in this study was therefore found not to be sufficiently high. However the rest of the results were analysed for the purpose of fulfilling the objectives mentioned in section 3.1.2 of this chapter.

3.6.3.4 The relationships between the individual stories

When inspecting the results of the relationship between individual stories they revealed that:

- Story 3 relates to all the other stories with the exception of story 6. Story 3 relates to story 1 ($r = 0.16$; $p < 0.05$), story 2 ($r = 0.14$; $p < 0.05$), story 4 ($r = 0.17$; $p < 0.01$) and story 5 ($r = 0.27$; $p < 0.01$).
- Story 1 relates to story 3 ($r = 0.16$; $p < 0.05$) and story 4 ($r = 0.15$; $p < 0.05$).
- Story 2 relates to story 3 ($r = 0.14$; $p < 0.05$) and story 5 ($r = 0.16$; $p < 0.05$).
- Story 6 does not relate to any of the other stories individually.

- No other relationships were found between the six stories.

TABLE 3.7: Moral reasoning levels: Relationships between total scores of six stories and total for all stories together (N = 268)

	Story 1	Story 2	Story 3	Story 4	Story 5	Story 6	Total	Sub- total S1+3+5	Sub- total S2+4+6
Story 1									
Story 2	NR								
Story 3	+0.16*	+0.14*							
Story 4	+0.15*	NR	+0.17**						
Story 5	NR	+0.16*	+0.27**	NR					
Story 6	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR				
Total	+0.48**	+0.42**	+0.61**	+0.47**	+0.60**	+0.45**			
Sub- total S1+3+5	+0.57**	+0.16**	+0.72**	+0.21**	0.70**	+0.13*	+0.85**		
Sub- total S2+4+6	+0.15*	+0.57**	+0.20**	+0.59**	+0.20**	+0.66**	+0.74**	+0.27**	

Correlation significant: * = $p < 0.05$ ** = $p < 0.01$ NR = No relationship

Total = Add scores of responses to questions 1+2+3+4 of each story separately.

Total: S1+3+5 = sum of response scores for stories 1, 3 & 5.

Total: S2+4+6 = sum of response scores for stories 2, 4 & 6.

The strength of or the non-existence of relationships between the individual stories may be explained in terms of the content that each story contained. This relates to one of the criticisms of Kohlberg's theory that moral thought is not only related to a particular stage of moral development (as Kohlberg proposed), but also to the content in which the moral dilemmas exist (Seifert & Hoffnung, 1997: 494). Therefore the participants' responses to the moral dilemmas may have been partially influenced by their perceptions of the content presented.

The fact that story 6 did not relate to any of the other stories individually is difficult to explain. This moral dilemma's content was based on a school related issue about whether a student newspaper should be banned or not, since it created some discontent amongst the learners. This was unlike the other stories whose contents related to issues outside the school situation. The content of the other stories also related to moral dilemmas of a more serious nature such as breaking the law to save a life or to prevent animal cruelty, whether to employ a person or not and to practice euthanasia or not. Therefore, given the views (already explained above) that moral reasoning is partially influenced by the social contexts, the non-existence of relationships between this story and the other stories individually could be explained by its different social context and its relative unimportance to the research group.

3.6.4 Moral reasoning levels of the various groupings within the research group

3.6.4.1 Modal scores representing moral reasoning levels

The levels of moral reasoning (pre-conventional, conventional and post-conventional levels) based on the mode as central tendency are indicated in the table 3.8(a) and table 3.8(b). This data represents the various research groupings' modal scores for each of the 24 responses (4 responses per story). The modal frequency percentages of these scores for each of the research groupings appear at the bottom of table 3.8(a) and table 3.8(b).

A scan of the levels of moral reasoning modal scores for the various research groupings (age and gender groupings) in table 3.8(a) and table 3.8(b) together revealed that the most common modal score was the score that represented the post-conventional level of moral reasoning for all the groupings. The second most common modal score represented the conventional level of moral reasoning and there was also a relatively small representation of the pre-conventional level of moral reasoning.

The total research group as well as the 17/18-year-old male group had 4% of the participants who had modal moral reasoning scores at a transitional level between the conventional and post-conventional levels. The 13/14-year-old group, on the other hand, had 4% of the participants who were reasoning at a transitional level between the pre-conventional and conventional levels.

The transitional modal reasoning scores could be explained in terms of Kohlberg's theory, that describes moral development in terms of a series of invariant stages, similar to Piaget's stages of cognitive development (Louw *et al.*, 1998: 460; Kohlberg, 1975: 670-671). Therefore some of the participants may have been experiencing a state of transition from one stage to the next in their moral development.

An analysis of the data relating to the six stories (moral dilemmas) in table 3.8(a) and table 3.8(b) together revealed the following:

- For stories 1, 3, 4 and 5 the most common modal score for all the research groupings represented the post-conventional moral reasoning level.
- The modal scores for stories 2 and 6 for all the research groupings equally represented the conventional and the post-conventional levels.
- Conventional moral reasoning for all the research groupings was most commonly represented by the modal scores in the following responses: S1.4; S2.1 and 2.2; S3.4; S5.3 and 5.4; and S6.1 and 6.3.
- Although the pre-conventional moral reasoning level generally had the least modal score representation, it was the most common modal score representation for all the research groupings in the following responses: S1.2 and S3.2.

The variance in the modal scores may once more be explained in terms of the nature of the stories' content and the manner in which the individual responses were worded. Also the instrument made provision for hypothetical decisions after every dilemma. Two decisions were made after every dilemma and were either whether an act should be committed or not. Participants had to select responses in the light of these decisions. The nature of each decision may have influenced participants' choices from the list of responses (See the appendix for a copy of one of the stories and the corresponding list of responses that had to be chosen from). The differences in moral reasoning levels in terms of age and gender will be discussed in the next section with reference to table 3.9.

Table 3.8(a): Moral reasoning levels: within and across the six stories based on the mode as central tendency measure per gender and age group (N=268)

Story responses	Total group. (N=268)	Males (n=135)	Females (n=133)	13/14 olds (n=115)	17/18 year olds (n=153)
S1.1	POST-conv.	POST-conv.	POST-conv.	POST-conv.	POST-conv.
S1.2	PRE-conv.	POST-conv.	PRE-conv.	POST-conv.	PRE-conv.
S1.3	POST-conv.	POST-conv.	POST-conv.	POST-conv.	POST-conv.
S1.4	Conventional	Conventional	Conventional	Conventional	Conventional
S2.1	Conventional	Conventional	Conventional	Conventional	Conventional
S2.2	Conventional	Conventional	Conventional	Conventional	Conventional
S2.3	POST-conv.	POST-conv.	POST-conv.	POST-conv.	POST-conv.
S2.4	POST-conv.	POST-conv.	POST-conv.	POST-conv.	POST-conv.
S3.1	POST-conv.	POST-conv.	POST-conv.	POST-conv.	POST-conv.
S3.2	PRE-conv.	PRE-conv.	PRE-conv.	PRE-conv.	PRE-conv.
S3.3	POST-conv.	POST-conv.	POST-conv.	POST-conv.	POST-conv.
S3.4	Conventional	Conventional	Conventional	Conventional	Conventional
S4.1	POST-conv.	POST-conv.	POST-conv.	POST-conv.	POST-conv.
S4.2	POST-conv.	POST-conv.	POST-conv.	POST-conv.	POST-conv.
S4.3	Conv./Post-con	POST-conv.	Conventional	Pre-con/Conv.	POST-conv.
S4.4	POST-conv.	POST-conv.	POST-conv.	POST-conv.	POST-conv.
S5.1	POST-conv.	POST-conv.	POST-conv.	POST-conv.	POST-conv.
S5.2	POST-conv.	POST-conv.	POST-conv.	POST-conv.	POST-conv.
S5.3	Conventional	Conventional	Conventional	Conventional	Conventional
S5.4	Conventional	Conventional	Conventional	Conventional	POST-conv.
S6.1	Conventional	Conventional	Conventional	Conventional	Conventional
S6.2	POST-conv.	POST-conv.	POST-conv.	POST-conv.	POST-conv.
S6.3	Conventional	Conventional	Conventional	Conventional	Conventional
S6.4	POST-conv.	POST-conv.	POST-conv.	POST-conv.	POST-conv.
Levels	Frequency (%) representation of each level for the 24 responses				
PRE-con	2 (8%)	1 (4%)	2 (8%)	1 (4%)	2 (8%)
Conven.	8 (33%)	8 (33%)	9 (38%)	8 (33%)	7 (29%)
POST-con	13 (55%)	15 (63%)	13 (54%)	14 (59%)	15 (63%)
Pre/Con	-	-	-	1 (4%)	-
Con/Post	1 (4%)	-	-	-	-

PRE-conv. = Pre-conventional level of moral reasoning

POST-conv. = Post-conventional level of moral reasoning

S1.1 – S1.4 refer to the 4 response items relating to story 1

etc.

Table 3.8(b): Moral reasoning levels: within and across the six stories based on the mode as central tendency measure per gender within age group (N=268)

	13/14 year olds (n=115)		17/18 year olds (n=153)	
STORY RESPONSES	Males (n=53)	Females (n=62)	Males (n=82)	Females (n=71)
S1.1	POST-conv.	POST-conv.	POST-conv.	POST-conv.
S1.2	POST-conv.	PRE-conv.	PRE-conv.	PRE-conv.
S1.3	POST-conv.	POST-conv.	POST-conv.	POST-conv.
S1.4	Conventional	Conventional	Conventional	Conventional
S2.1	Conventional	Conventional	Conventional	Conventional
S2.2	Conventional	Conventional	Conventional	Conventional
S2.3	POST-conv.	POST-conv.	POST-conv.	POST-conv.
S2.4	POST-conv.	POST-conv.	POST-conv.	POST-conv.
S3.1	POST-conv.	POST-conv.	POST-conv.	POST-conv.
S3.2	POST-conv.	PRE-conv.	PRE-conv.	PRE-conv.
S3.3	POST-conv.	POST-conv.	CON/POST	POST-conv.
S3.4	Conventional	Conventional	Conventional	Conventional
S4.1	POST-conv.	POST-conv.	POST-conv.	POST-conv.
S4.2	POST-conv.	POST-conv.	POST-conv.	POST-conv.
S4.3	PRE-conv.	POST-conv.	POST-conv.	Conventional
S4.4	POST-conv.	POST-conv.	POST-conv.	POST-conv.
S5.1	POST-conv.	Conventional	POST-conv.	POST-conv.
S5.2	POST-conv.	POST-conv.	POST-conv.	POST-conv.
S5.3	Conventional	Conventional	Conventional	Conventional
S5.4	Conventional	Conventional	Conventional	POST-conv.
S6.1	Conventional	Conventional	Conventional	Conventional
S6.2	POST-conv.	POST-conv.	POST-conv.	POST-conv.
S6.3	Conventional	Conventional	Conventional	Conventional
S6.4	POST-conv.	POST-conv.	POST-conv.	POST-conv.
Levels	Frequency (%) representation of each level for the 24 responses			
PRE-con	1 (4%)	2 (8%)	2 (8%)	2 (8%)
Conven.	8 (33%)	9 (38%)	8 (33%)	8 (33%)
POST-con	15 (63%)	13 (54%)	13 (54%)	14 (59%)
Con/Post	-	-	1 (4%)	-

PRE-conv. = Pre-conventional level of moral reasoning

POST-conv. = Post-conventional level of moral reasoning

S1.1 – S1.4 refer to the 4 response items relating to story 1

etc.

3.6.4.2 Frequencies of the three levels of moral reasoning for the gender and age groupings

The data in table 3.9 represents the frequencies of the three levels of moral reasoning for the age and gender groupings. These frequencies were calculated by collating the responses for the various research groupings. The findings are similar to the modal score representations discussed in table 3.8(a) and table 3.8(b) above. The moral reasoning level frequencies may give a better picture of the moral reasoning levels within the research group as compared to the modal moral scores in table 3.8(a) and table 3.8(b).

These frequency scores revealed the following:

- The most common moral reasoning frequency level for the entire research group was the post-conventional level (60%), followed by the conventional level (30%) and a relatively small frequency of 10% for the pre-conventional level. This tendency was also present in the age and gender research groupings, with at least 56% (almost three fifths) of the frequencies for all groupings representing the post-conventional level.
- The levels of moral reasoning percentage frequencies found for **all the male participants** were 10% at the pre-conventional level, 30% at the conventional level and 60% at the post-conventional level. The levels of moral reasoning percentage frequencies found for **all the female participants** were 11% at the pre-conventional level, 29% at the conventional level and 60% at the post-conventional level. This means that minimal gender differences occurred.
- The levels of moral reasoning percentage frequencies found for the **two age groupings** (13/14-year-olds & 17/18-year-olds) were: 12% and 9% at the pre-conventional level, 30% and 29% at the conventional level and 58% and 62% at the post-conventional level for the 13/14-year olds and the 17/18-year-olds respectively. These scores were also almost identical which meant that there were hardly any differences in moral reasoning levels in terms of age.
- **Within each age grouping** there were also hardly any **gender differences** in terms of moral reasoning frequency levels. Within the 13/14-year- old age group: 11% of the males and 13% of the females reasoned at the pre-conventional level, 28% of the males and 31% of the females reasoned at the conventional level and 61% of the males and 56% of the females reasoned at the post-conventional level of moral reasoning. Within the 17/18-year- old age group: 10% of the males and 8% of the females reasoned at the pre-conventional level, 31% of the males and 27% of the females reasoned at the conventional level and 59% of the males and 65% of the

females reasoned at the post-conventional level of moral reasoning.

Table 3.9: Frequencies of each of the three levels of moral reasoning for age and gender groupings (N=268)

GROUPING	Pre-conventional f (%)	Conventional f (%)	Post-conventional f (%)	Total F
GENDER				
Males	14 (10%)	41 (30%)	80 (60%)	135
Females	14 (11%)	38 (29%)	81 (60%)	133
AGE				
13/14 year olds	14 (12%)	34 (30%)	67 (58%)	115
17/18 year olds	14 (9%)	45 (29%)	94 (62%)	153
GENDER/AGE				
Male 13/14	6 (11%)	15 (28%)	32 (61%)	53
Male 17/18	8 (10%)	26 (31%)	48 (59%)	82
Female 13/14	8 (13%)	19 (31%)	35 (56%)	62
Female 17/18	6 (8%)	19 (27%)	46 (65%)	71
TOTAL GROUP	28 (10%)	79 (30%)	161 (60%)	268

Of all the frequencies indicated in table 3.9, the highest moral reasoning frequency for any level was found in the 17/18-year-old female group (65% at the post-conventional level). This group also had the lowest moral reasoning frequency for any level, which was 8% at the pre-conventional level.

The results indicate that the post-conventional level of moral reasoning was prevalent for the various research groups. The results also indicate that the proportional frequency representation for each of the three levels moral reasoning (pre-conventional,

conventional and post-conventional) did not differ greatly when comparing the proportional moral reasoning level frequencies of the various research groupings.

The moral reasoning frequency levels of the various research groupings correspond to Kohlberg's theory to some degree. The research group consisted of adolescents. Therefore the relatively small percentage of pre-conventional moral reasoning levels for all research groupings is consistent with Kohlberg's contention that pre-conventional moral reasoning is usually associated with most pre-adolescent and some adolescents (Kohlberg, 1976: 33-35). Also the pre-conventional level was represented (although slightly) more in the younger age cohort than in the older one. This particular aspect of the results corresponds with Kohlberg's theory that moral reasoning follows an invariant sequence of development and is related to Piaget's stages of cognitive development (Louw *et al.*, 1998: 460). Therefore generally speaking younger adolescents ought to reason at lower level than older adolescents.

The results also contained glaring inconsistencies with Kohlberg's model in terms of the frequency representation of the conventional and post-conventional moral reasoning levels in the study. Kohlberg was of the view that most adolescents and adults will not develop beyond the conventional level and very few adults will reach the post-conventional level. The results in this study (mentioned above) do not support this view because there was a substantial representation of post-conventional moral reasoning for all groupings, although conventional reasoning was also fairly represented.

3.6.4.3 Mean differences found for age and gender groupings per story

Mean differences for age and gender groupings were determined by using the T-test for independent samples. Table 3.10 indicates instances where mean differences were found in the study.

The results in table 3.10 indicate that:

- For story 1 there were significant mean differences between all 13/14-year-olds and all 17/18-year-olds ($p < 0.05$) and also between 13/14-year-old males and 17/18-year-old males ($p < 0.04$).
- For story 4 there were significant mean differences between the all males and the all females groupings ($p \leq 0.05$).
- For story 6 there were significant mean differences between all 13/14-year-olds and all 17/18-year-olds ($p < 0.02$), between 13/14-year-old females and 17/18-year-old

- No significant mean differences were found in stories 2, 3 and 5 for any of the age and gender groupings.

See APPENDIX 2 for the moral reasoning level means and standard deviations for each of the response items in terms of the various participant groupings. APPENDIX 3 indicates the differences between means of each response item for the various participant groupings.

TABLE 3.10: Moral reasoning: Differences between means of each story for the age and gender groupings (T-test for independent samples).

STORY	Male vs Females	13/14 vs 17/18	M13/14 vs M17/18	F13/14 vs F17/18	M13/14 vs F13/14	M17/18 vs F17/18
Story 1	ND	p<0.05	p<0.04	ND	ND	ND
Story 2.	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND
Story 3	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND
Story 4	p<0.05	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND
Story 5	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND
Story 6	ND	p<0.02	ND	p<0.01	ND	p<0.02

ND = No significant difference

M = males

F = females

3.6.5 Results pertaining to family functioning

The results pertaining to the participants' perceptions of their families' functioning are represented in tables 3.11 and 3.12. The results of these tables will be discussed simultaneously since they both relate to the means of the stanine scores of the various dimensions of family functioning. Table 3.11 gives a summary of the family functioning dimensions' means of stanine scores and their standard deviations for the various participant groupings. Table 3.12 indicates the significance of the differences between the means of the stanine scores between the family functioning dimensions of the various participant groupings. The participant groupings are indicated in the tables' headings.

The results indicate that the 13/14 year old males' group had the highest and the 17/18 year old females' group the lowest means of stanine scores respectively for each of the dimensions of family functioning as well as for global family functioning. Also, males scored higher than females in all groupings for each family functioning dimension. In terms of the two age groups, 13/14-year-olds scored higher than 17/18-year-olds in each family functioning dimension (table 3.11).

The above results therefore suggest that male participants in general and the 13/14-year-old males in particular had slightly more positive perceptions of their families' functioning when compared to the perceptions of their female counterparts. This difference may be due to female participants experiencing tensions with family members in a more serious light or having more responsibilities than males within the family system. This latter view may explain why the older female participants (17/18-year-olds) had the lowest perceptions of their families' functioning when compared to all the other sub-groups. When considering the socio-cultural context of the research population, the possibility exists that older female children have the most housekeeping responsibilities as compared to their siblings.

In terms of the age groupings younger participants had more positive perceptions of their families' functioning as compared to the older participants. The differences in terms of age could be explained by the possibility of the older adolescent participants experiencing a higher degree of discord with their families than younger participants as they strive towards increasing independence and assertion of their own identities. Generally speaking, there were no marked differences between the means of stanine scores of the various research groupings. This fact needs to be taken into account when making inferences about the participants' perceptions of their families' functioning.

A better picture of participants' perceptions regarding their families' functioning was achieved by rounding off the family functioning dimensions' means of stanine scores for each grouping (table 3.11) to the nearest whole number. These rounded off scores were then categorized in terms of the following descriptions of family functioning: low family functioning (represented by means of stanine scores 1, 2 & 3), average family functioning (represented by means of stanine scores 4, 5 & 6) and high family functioning (represented by means of stanine scores 7, 8 & 9). The rounded off scores of all the groupings fell within the average family functioning category. Within that category most of the means of stanine scores were either 4 or 5 with only the family functioning dimensions

Table 3.11: Family functioning: means of stanines and standard deviations for the various research groupings

FAMILY FUNCTIONING DIMENSIONS	TOTAL GROUP (N=268)	MALES (n=135)	FEMALES (n=133)	13/14 year olds (n=115)	17/18 year olds (n=153)	13/14 year old MALES	13/14 year old FEMALES	17/18 year old MALES	17/18 year old FEMALES
Structure	4.84 (1.94)	5.13 (1.96)	4.56 (1.87)	5.23 (1.79)	4.55 (1.99)	5.55 (1.55)	4.97 (1.95)	4.85 (2.16)	4.20 (1.74)
Affect	4.27 (1.71)	4.56 (1.74)	3.98 (1.63)	4.71 (1.58)	3.94 (1.73)	5.08 (1.47)	4.40 (1.62)	4.23 (1.84)	3.61 (1.54)
Communication	4.73 (1.78)	4.94 (1.81)	4.51 (1.74)	5.23 (1.75)	4.35 (1.71)	5.40 (1.89)	5.10 (1.64)	4.65 (1.70)	4.00 (1.67)
Behaviour control	4.07 (1.58)	4.13 (1.55)	4.01 (1.62)	4.22 (1.66)	3.95 (1.52)	4.30 (1.56)	4.15 (1.75)	4.01 (1.54)	3.89 (1.50)
Value transmission	5.91 (2.09)	5.99 (2.16)	5.83 (2.01)	6.37 (1.92)	5.57 (2.14)	6.47 (1.83)	6.29 (2.00)	5.68 (2.30)	5.44 (1.95)
External systems	5.51 (2.00)	5.96 (1.99)	5.06 (1.93)	5.69 (1.95)	5.38 (2.04)	6.26 (1.88)	5.19 (1.95)	5.76 (2.08)	4.94 (1.91)
Global	4.47 (1.54)	4.74 (1.57)	4.20 (1.47)	4.91 (1.46)	4.14 (1.52)	5.21 (1.29)	4.66 (1.56)	4.44 (1.66)	3.79 (1.26)

Note: Standard deviation appears in brackets below the mean

Table 3.12: Family functioning: significance of mean differences between components for the various research groupings (t-test).

FAMILY FUNCTIONING DIMENSIONS	Males vs. Females	13/14 vs. 17/18	Males 13/14 vs. 17/18	Females 13/14 vs. 17/18	13/14 yearolds Males vs. Females	17/18 year olds Males vs. Females
Structure	Difference p<0.02	Difference p<0.01	Difference p<0.05	Difference p<0.02	NO difference	Difference p<0.05
Affect	Difference p<0.01	Difference p<0.01	Difference p<0.01	Difference p<0.01	Difference p<0.03	Difference p<0.03
Communication	Difference p<0.05	Difference p<0.01	Difference p<0.02	Difference p<0.01	NO difference	Difference p<0.02
Behaviour control	NO difference	NO difference	NO difference	NO difference	NO difference	NO difference
Value transmission	NO difference	Difference p<0.01	Difference p<0.04	Difference p<0.02	NO difference	NO difference
External systems	Difference p<0.01	NO difference	NO difference	NO difference	Difference p<0.01	Difference p<0.02
Global	Difference	Difference	Difference	Difference	Difference	Difference

of value transmission and external systems having a mean of stanine score of 6 for most of the groupings. In fact, all but one (17/18 year old females) of the rounded off means of stanine scores for value transmission were 6. A mean stanine score (rounded off) of 4 was found for all the groupings in the behaviour control dimension.

The above results indicate that generally the research group perceived their families as functioning at an average level, with the most positive perceptions being that of the value transmission and external systems dimensions.

The results also indicated significant mean differences between the dimensions of family functioning for the different sub-groups (table 3.12). These differences for each of the family functions were as follows:

- **Family structure**

Significant mean differences were found in all the groupings except for the 13/14-year-old males versus females group.

- **Affect**

Significant mean differences were found in all groupings for this family dimension.

- **Communication**

Significant mean differences were found in all but one of the groupings for this family functioning dimension. There was no significant mean difference for the 13/14-year-old males versus female group.

- **Behaviour control**

There were no significant mean differences found for any of the groupings in this dimension of family functioning.

- **Value transmission**

Significant mean differences were found in the following participant groupings for this family functioning dimension: 13/14-year-olds versus 17/18-year-olds, 13/14-year-old males versus 17/18-year-old males and 13/14-year-old females versus 17/18-year-old females. No significant mean differences were found in the following groupings: males versus females in

the total group, males versus females in the 13/14-year-old age group and males versus females in the 17/18-year-old age group.

- **External systems**

Significant mean differences were found in the following groupings for this family functioning dimension: males versus females for the total group, males versus females in the 13/14-year-old age group and males versus females in the 17/18-year-old age group.

- **Global family functioning**

Significant mean differences were found in all the groupings in this dimension of family functioning.

These results indicate that significant differences as well as similarities existed in the participants' perceptions of family functioning in the various dimensions. The fact that there were no significant differences in terms of behaviour control for all the groupings suggests that the participants had similar perceptions about this particular family functioning dimension that relates to aspects such as discipline and parenting styles. This finding is inconsistent with the researcher's expectations that older children often question authority figures such as parents and may therefore question prevailing disciplinary practices implemented by the parents.

3.6.6 The relationship between moral reasoning and family functioning

One of the primary objectives of this study was to investigate the relationship between adolescents' levels of moral reasoning and their perceptions of their families' functioning. Table 3.13 indicates the extent of this relationship. There were significant **positive correlations** between story 1 and the following family functioning dimensions: affect ($r = +0.14$; $p < 0.05$), communication ($r = +0.16$; $p < 0.01$), behaviour control ($r = +0.14$; $p < 0.05$) and global family functioning ($r = +0.14$; $p < 0.05$). There were significant **negative correlations** between story 4 and the following family functioning dimensions: structure ($r = -0.16$; $p < 0.01$), affect ($r = -0.17$; $p < 0.01$), value transmission ($r = -0.13$; $p < 0.05$), and global family functioning ($r = -0.15$; $p < 0.05$). There were no other relationships present between the stories (representing moral reasoning) and the family functioning dimensions. The stories taken as a whole also had no relationship to any of the family functioning

dimensions. Although a few significant correlations were found, they were low, indicating weak relationships existing between moral reasoning and the dimensions of family functioning.

Table 3.13: The relationship between moral reasoning and family functioning: mean scores

Stories	FAMILY FUNCTIONING DIMENSIONS						
	Structure	Affect	Communication	Behaviour control	Value transmission	External systems	Global Family Function.
Story 1	NR	+0.14*	+0.16**	+0.14*	NR	NR	+0.14*
Story 2	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR
Story 3	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR
Story 4	-0.16**	-0.17**	NR	NR	-0.13*	NR	-0.15*
Story 5	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR
Story 6	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR
Total	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR	NR

Correlation significant: * = $p < 0.05$ ** = $p < 0.01$ NR = No relationship

Total = Add scores for responses 1+2+3+4 of each story (moral dilemma) separately

Table 3.13 indicates that significant correlations were found between moral reasoning and family functioning only in a few instances.

The positive correlation of story 1 with the affect, communication, behaviour control and global family functioning dimensions, though low, suggested that these dimensions were related to the moral development of the participants. Such a relationship would be expected because warm parent-child relations, good channels of communication and appropriate disciplinary styles usually positively correspond with high levels of moral development whilst the opposite occurs when the said dimensions are perceived to be unsatisfactory. The content as well as the nature of the responses in story 1 may have also partially been responsible for the correlation since they related to emotions, communication and behaviour.

The negative correlation between story 4 and the family functioning dimensions of structure, affect and value transmission as well as global family functioning was low. The correlation could be interpreted as positive perceptions of those family functioning dimensions corresponding to lower levels of moral reasoning, and/or negative perceptions of those family functioning dimensions corresponding to higher levels of moral reasoning. However this finding is inconsistent with the literature and difficult to explain since all the dimensions of family functioning would be expected to play a role in the adolescent's moral development. Once again the content and the nature of the response items in story 4 may have contributed to the formation of this significantly negative (though low) correlation.

The fact that only two stories were found to have significant relationships with some of the dimensions of family functioning suggests that the family functioning dimensions are not directly related to the moral development of the participants. This is inconsistent with the literature about the role of family functioning in the moral development of the individual. The family functioning dimension of value transmission had a significant (negative) correlation with only one of the stories. This was unexpected given the researcher's expectation that value transmission within the family would play an important role in the moral development of the adolescent. However since the reliability of the moral reasoning instrument (MOSOV) could not be sufficiently established in this study, the correlations or non-correlations between family functioning and moral reasoning in table 3.12 above should be treated with circumspect.

Since only two stories had significant relationships with some of the dimensions of family functioning for the entire research group, this relationship was not further analysed in terms of age and gender groupings.

3.6.7 Conclusion

This study had a number of objectives. These objectives were achieved and the analysis of the study's results made a number of findings. These findings were used to test the hypotheses mentioned in section 3.2.

The objectives were achieved by: determining the research group's levels of moral reasoning tendencies in terms of age and gender groupings, comparing these tendencies with Kohlberg's model of moral development, calculating participants' perceptions of their families' functioning, investigating the relationship between participants' family functioning perceptions and their levels of moral reasoning and by measuring the validity and reliability of the MOSOV instrument. A discussion of the findings and the acceptance or rejection of the hypotheses follows.

The findings indicated that there were very minimal differences in the tendency levels of moral development between males and females within the total research group and when gender comparisons were made within each age group. This was also evident when the levels of moral reasoning were analysed in terms of the chronological age groupings (13/14-year-old's and 17/18-year-old's). Since there were hardly any differences in the levels of moral reasoning in terms of age and gender, hypotheses H1 and H2 are rejected and the related null-hypotheses (HO1 and HO2) are accepted. Social contexts might have played a role in these findings, therefore inferences could be drawn between these findings and the literature relating to moral development in terms of the social learning theory.

The study revealed that the participants' perceptions of their families' functioning was average (generally from stanines 4 to 6). There were minimal differences in terms of the means of stanine scores for each of the different research groupings. The findings concerning participants' perceptions of their families' functioning also revealed that males had slightly higher positive perceptions of their families' functioning than females in general. There were also differences in terms of age groups with younger participants (13/14-year-old's) having slightly higher positive perceptions of their families' functioning than the older age group (17/18-year-old's). Significant mean differences were present in some dimensions, when individual family dimensions were examined in terms of the age and gender research

groupings. Given the findings concerning adolescents' perceptions of the dimensions of their families' functioning, hypotheses H3 and H4 are partially accepted.

Very limited significant correlations were found between the individual moral dilemmas (of the MOSOV instrument) and the dimensions of family functioning. Of the six moral dilemmas (stories), one correlated positively and the other one negatively with some of the dimensions of family functioning. Value transmission was one of the dimensions of family functioning that was included in the negative correlation. This was surprising, given the expectation that there would be a significant positive correlation between value transmission and moral development.

The findings did not also present a strong and/or consistent correlation between moral reasoning and all the dimensions of family functioning. Therefore this relationship was not further analysed in terms of age and gender groupings. This meant that hypotheses H5 and H6 could not be tested. The findings were also inconsistent with the literature concerning the relationship between moral development and family functioning.

The study also revealed some unexpected findings relating to the MOSOV instrument. The findings relating to levels of moral reasoning were inconsistent with Kohlberg's cognitive-developmental theory on moral development in two instances. Firstly (unlike Kohlberg's theory) there were no distinct differences in the levels of moral reasoning in terms of age. Also the proportional representation of the levels of moral reasoning in the findings did not correspond with Kohlberg's theory, since the findings (unlike Kohlberg's theory) indicated a significantly higher proportional representation of the post-conventional level.

The MOSOV instrument may also not have been applicable to this research group possibly because of the nature of the instrument's content. The participants may not have strongly identified with the moral dilemmas in terms of their own social contexts or the selection of responses were influenced by the preceding hypothetical decisions that were provided in the instrument. After every dilemma there were two hypothetical decisions, one relating to an action that was taken and the other to an action that was not taken. The nature of the decision in each instance may have therefore influenced the manner in which the participants thought about the response items. It is also interesting to note that in some instances there were clear response patterns for all the research groupings. There were therefore instances

when all the research groupings were clearly represented at the same level of moral reasoning for some of the response items. This may have been due to the manner in which these response items were expressed. This may also have been due to participants' selecting the socially desirable responses (popular views) instead of selecting response items in terms of their own internal set of values. The unexpected proportionally high levels of moral reasoning may also have been due to participants' need for social desirability. Lastly, the levels of moral reasoning represent levels of moral thought and not moral behaviour. Participants may have thought at a certain level of moral reasoning, but this does not necessarily mean that their moral behaviours are consistent with their levels of moral reasoning.

CHAPTER 4: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Introduction

This, the last chapter, will deal with a summary of the findings, conclusions and shortcomings of the study as well as recommendations for further research.

4.2 FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The study made the following findings:

- The construct validity and the reliability of the MOSOV moral reasoning instrument for this study were determined, although the reliability co-efficient was not high enough. Since the reliability of the instrument for this study was not high enough, the frequencies of the different levels of moral reasoning found in the study are questionable.
- Minimal differences in the frequencies of the participants' levels of moral reasoning were found for both age and gender groupings. The moral reasoning level with highest frequency for the different research groupings was the post-conventional level. The conventional level was fairly represented and only a small representation of the pre-conventional level was found.
- These findings do not support Kohlberg's theory in the main because of the high frequency of the post-conventional level of moral reasoning present. This contradicts Kohlberg's view that most adolescents and adults will only reach the conventional level of moral reasoning and only a small percentage of adults will reach the post-conventional level.
- The study revealed that participants' perceptions of their families' functioning was average (generally from stanines 4 to 6) with minimal differences in terms of the stanine mean scores for each of the different research groupings.
- The findings concerning participants' perceptions of their families' functioning also revealed that males had slightly higher positive perceptions of their families' functioning than females in general. Also in terms of age groups, younger participants had slightly higher positive perceptions of their families' functioning than older participants.
- Significant mean differences were present in some instances, when individual family dimensions were examined in terms of the age and gender research groupings.

- Very few significant correlations were found between the individual moral dilemmas (of the MOSOV instrument) and the dimensions of family functioning. Of the six moral dilemmas (stories), one correlated positively and the other one correlated negatively with some of the dimensions of family functioning. Value transmission was one of the dimensions of family functioning that was included in the negative correlation. This was surprising, given the expectation that there would be a significant positive correlation between value transmission and moral development.
- The MOSOV instrument may have also not been applicable to this research group. This may have been due to the participants' not strongly identifying with the moral dilemmas contained in the MOSOV. Response items had to be selected in terms of the preceding hypothetical decisions that were provided in the instrument. This could have influenced participants' choices. Clear response patterns for all the research groupings were evident in some instances. This may have been due to participants' selecting the socially desirable responses (popular views) instead of selecting response items in terms of their own internal set of values.

When considering the above, the following conclusions can be drawn:

The patterns of moral development found were unexpected. However, given the insufficient reliability of the MOSOV instrument in this study the findings on moral development may be questionable. The MOSOV's insufficient reliability may have also influenced the findings concerning the relationship between the levels of moral reasoning and family functioning. Kohlberg's theory on moral development is not adequately represented in this study and some of the criticisms leveled at his theory seem to apply to this study. Aspects such as the participants' social contexts in relation to the moral dilemmas may have influenced the findings related to the different levels of moral reasoning. Slight differences in participants' perceptions about their families' functioning were found within age and gender groupings with significant mean differences present for some family dimensions in both age and gender cohorts. The relationship between family functioning and moral development was found to be not as sufficiently strong as expected.

In view of the findings the first two hypotheses (H1 and H2) were rejected. Hypotheses H3 and H4 were partially accepted and hypotheses H5 and H6 were not tested.

4.3 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study's limitations were:

- The sample size was not big enough to make any generalisations about the findings.
- Interviews to gauge levels of moral development may be a better research tool than the completion of a questionnaire. In this manner the study might have been more relevant to the real-life contexts of the participants.
- The school reported that the literacy levels of the research population were generally low, thus the participants' reading abilities were generally unsatisfactory. The researcher therefore conducted the administration of the research instruments by reading each item with the aid of audio-visual equipment (over-head projector). This meant that all participants had to work at the same pace to accommodate those participants who worked at a slower pace. Therefore those participants who could have worked at a faster pace may have experienced a level of boredom or a loss of concentration. This in turn could have influenced the participants' choice of response items.
- Participants experienced problems with the language used in the MOSOV instrument, although Afrikaans is their first language. The researcher felt that the level of the language used in the MOSOV was higher than that used by most participants. This could have had some influence on the findings. However, participants were allowed to clarify any aspect of the research they did not understand throughout the process.

4.4 IMPLICATIONS FOR EDUCATORS AND PARENTS

Although the study did not find any strong relationship between moral development and family functioning, the related theory (discussed in chapter two) clearly contends that family functioning and moral development may be strongly related. Some of the theory discussed implies a causal relationship between family functioning and moral development. It is therefore imperative that educators and parents consider this view since they probably have the major influence on the socialisation of children.

Parents need to consider how the family environment influences their children's moral development. Family dynamics seem to influence the manner in which the child thinks about and responds to moral dilemmas. Parents need to promote an environment at home that assists with the moral development of the child by reflecting on various aspects of parenting.

The disciplinary (parenting) styles that parents impose should promote self-discipline in their children, so that children learn to take responsibility for their own behaviours and to consider the consequences of their actions. Parents should not merely prescribe house rules, but negotiate these rules with their children so that children play a meaningful role in the establishment of these rules. In this manner children learn the value of rules in maintaining healthy social relations. They also learn to regulate their own behaviours and to accept responsibility for their actions.

Parents need to promote communication, which encourages individuals: to share their views willingly, to listen to the views of others and to respect the right of others to have opposing views. Children need to feel comfortable in expressing their own views even if they reflect values that are inconsistent with those of the family. Therefore parents need to reflect on the latitude given to their children to develop their own identities, thereby developing their own value systems. Parents also need to encourage cognitively rich debates especially those of a contentious and/or moral nature. In this manner children are exposed to divergent views and are afforded the opportunity to compare their ways of thinking to those of others about complex issues or problems that have no easy or simple solutions. These exercises assist the child in developing his/her own value system as he/she matures into adulthood. Parents need to promote family relations that nurture self-esteem and confidence amongst children. Healthy family relations promote a willingness to share views, a sense of worth and the confidence of the individual to have a personal opinion.

Religious and cultural beliefs also need to be taken into account since families' value systems may be greatly shaped by these social institutions. Parents need to act as role models to their children when dealing with moral issues.

Educators need to afford learners ample opportunity to develop morally by providing cognitively rich environments for debate and discussion. The current (outcomes based) system of education not only encourages educators to develop co-operative learning amongst their learners; it also encourages learners to think creatively as individuals and to learn life skills. The development of creative thinking and the acquisition of life skills can be promoted by discussing contentious issues such as euthanasia, pre-marital sex, abortion, cloning and sexual orientation in class, where learners could be exposed to differing points of view.

Learners may usually only discuss issues of this nature with their peers. Although peer discussions may play an important role in shaping the adolescent's views on moral issues, the peer group may be inadequate in fulfilling this role. Other agencies such as the school (educators) may play a vital role in exposing learners to other (maybe more complex) ways of thinking about moral issues. Learners also need to be exposed to different cultural and religious beliefs, which may contain differences in their value systems

Morality and moral thinking is also an integral aspect of an individual's lifestyle. It should therefore be included and integrated in the school curriculum so that learners can reflect on their views about morality and adapt them as they mature in their reasoning. Life Orientation as a learning area is therefore vital in teaching life skills to learners and exposing them to differing points of view. However, other learning areas also provide rich sources of moral debate. For example the use of animals in scientific experiments could be discussed during a science lesson or the contents of a past event could be debated during a history lesson. Educators (as figures of authority) also need to afford learners the opportunities to express their views in acceptable ways.

4.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The following recommendations are made:

- The moral development of adolescents needs to be investigated on a larger scale to get a better understanding of this process.
- Although the MOSOV instrument was found to insufficiently reliable in this study, the scale of the study was too small to make a generalisation about the usefulness of the instrument as a measure of moral development. Further research with this instrument has to be conducted on a larger scale to gauge its effectiveness in terms of the language used for different South African communities. The instrument's moral dilemmas also need to be examined to assess how they relate to the social contexts of different South African communities.
- Further research on the relationship between moral development and family functioning needs to be conducted, by using a qualitative approach. It is hoped that by using this approach a deeper understanding of this relationship might be achieved.

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APPENDIX 1: HERMAN EN DIE MEDISYNE

'n Vrou was sterwend as gevolg van 'n probleem met haar niere. Volgens die dokters was daar net een soort medisyne wat haar moontlik gesond sou kon maak. Dit was 'n soort medisyne wat 'n apteker in dieselfde dorp vervaardig het. Die bestanddele van die medisyne was duur, maar die apteker het 10 keer meer daarvoor gevra as wat sy onkoste was. Die siek vrou se man, Herman, het by almal wat hy geken het, geld probeer leen, maar hy kon net R1 000 in die hande kry, wat maar die helfte van die verkoopprijs was. Hy het vir die apteker gesê dat sy vrou sterwend is en hom gevra om die medisyne goedkoper te verkoop, of om hom toe te laat om later te betaal. Maar die apteker het gesê: "Nee, ek het die formule van die medisyne ontdek en ek gaan geld daaruit maak". Herman het wanhopig geraak en daaraan begin dink om by die apteek in te breek om die medisyne vir sy vrou te steel.

Moet Herman die medisyne steel?

VERONDERSTEL JY HET BESLUIT HERMAN KAN MAAR
DIE MEDISYNE STEEL

In afdeling A en B is daar 'n aantal redes waarom Herman die medisyne maar kan steel.

Afdeling A

Watter **een** van die redes in afdeling A sal jy as die **belangrikste** beskou? **Antwoord op die antwoordblad (blok1).**

1. 'n Mens se gesin kom altyd eerste.
2. Dit is verkeerd dat een mens 'n ander uitbuit as hy in nood verkeer.
3. Hy steel nie vir homself nie, maar ter wille van sy vrou.
4. Dit is belangriker om 'n lewe te red as om 'n wet te gehoorsaam.
5. Dit sal nie veroorsaak dat hy aanhoudend wette oortree nie.
6. Sy vrou sal hom kwalik neem as hy dit nie doen nie.

Afdeling B

Watter **een** van die redes in afdeling B sal jy as die **belangrikste** beskou? **Antwoord op die antwoordblad (blok2).**

1. Sy gewete sal hom nie aankla nie, want hy wou dit aanvanklik op 'n eerlike manier bekom.
2. Die meeste mans sal dit vir hulle vrouens doen.
3. Die apteker wou nie na rede luister nie.
4. Hy sal die liefdesgebod oortree as hy dit nie doen nie.
5. Die straf vir so 'n daad kan nie te erg wees nie.
6. Hy moet die medisyne nou steel. Daarna kan hy weer met die apteker oor die betaling onderhandel.

VERONDERSTEL JY HET BESLUIT HERMAN MAG NIE
DIE MEDISYNE STEEL NIE

In afdeling A en B is daar 'n aantal redes waarom Herman die medisyne nie mag steel nie.

Afdeling A

Watter **een** van die redes in afdeling A sal jy as die **belangrikste** beskou? **Antwoord op die antwoordblad (blok3).**

1. Herman moet dit nie steel nie, want iemand kan weer iets van hom steel.
2. Eerlikheid sal as beginsel tot niet gaan as dit nie in alle omstandighede toegepas word nie.
3. Dit is nie hoe 'n opgevoede mens teenoor ander optree nie.
4. Die apteker het ook 'n reg wat beskerm moet word.
5. 'n Mens kan nie in 'n samelewing wette oortree soos wat jy wil nie.
6. Iemand wat steel kan tronkstraf kry.

Afdeling B

Watter **een** van die redes in afdeling B sal jy as die **belangrikste** beskou? **Antwoord op die antwoordblad (blok4).**

1. Hy moet nie die medisyne steel nie, want hy sal nie met sy gewete kan saamleef nie.
2. Sy vrou sal nie van hom verwag om tot so 'n uiterste te gaan nie.
3. Hy sal as 'n dief gebrandmerk word.
4. Daar is beter maniere om medisyne in die hande te kry as om wette van die samelewing te oortree.
5. Hy kan beboet word en hy het alreeds nie geld nie.
6. Dit is nie tot voordeel van Herman of die apteker nie.

APPENDIX 2: MORAL REASONING: MEANS (STANDARD DEVIATION) FOR STORIES ACCORDING TO VARIOUS GROUPINGS

STORY	TOTAL GR. (N=268)	Males (n=135)	Females (n=133)	13/14 year olds (n=115)	17/18 year olds (n=153)	Male 13/14 (n=53)	Female 13/14 (n=62)	Male 17/18 (n=82)	Female 17/18 (n=71)
S1.1	4.50 (1.43)	4.44 (1.44)	4.56 (1.41)	4.44 (1.46)	4.54 (1.40)	4.40 (1.51)	4.48 (1.43)	4.46 (1.41)	4.62 (1.34)
S1.2	3.43 (1.60)	3.58 (1.56)	3.28 (1.63)	3.63 (1.58)	3.28 (1.60)	3.91 (1.45)	3.39 (1.66)	3.37 (1.60)	3.18 (1.60)
S1.3	3.74 (1.96)	3.76 (1.93)	3.71 (2.00)	3.89 (2.02)	3.63 (1.91)	4.02 (1.92)	3.77 (2.11)	3.60 (1.92)	3.66 (1.90)
S1.4	3.51 (1.31)	3.55 (1.27)	3.48 (1.35)	3.72 (1.25)	3.36 (1.33)	3.79 (1.35)	3.66 (1.17)	3.39 (1.19)	3.32 (1.48)
S2.1	3.60 (1.22)	3.54 (1.25)	3.67 (1.20)	3.69 (1.27)	3.54 (1.19)	3.43 (1.22)	3.90 (1.29)	3.61 (1.27)	3.46 (1.08)
S2.2	3.60 (1.40)	3.64 (1.32)	3.56 (1.48)	3.39 (1.36)	3.76 (1.41)	3.43 (1.17)	3.35 (1.52)	3.78 (1.41)	3.75 (1.43)
S2.3	4.57 (1.71)	4.64 (1.64)	4.50 (1.79)	4.37 (1.82)	4.72 (1.62)	4.58 (1.68)	4.19 (1.93)	4.68 (1.62)	4.76 (1.62)
S2.4	4.56 (1.54)	4.44 (1.44)	4.44 (1.61)	4.64 (1.57)	4.50 (1.52)	4.66 (1.57)	4.63 (1.59)	4.71 (1.42)	4.27 (1.61)
S3.1	4.13 (1.84)	3.58 (1.56)	4.23 (1.84)	4.06 (1.85)	4.19 (1.83)	4.06 (1.84)	4.06 (1.87)	4.04 (1.84)	4.37 (1.81)
S3.2	3.38 (1.80)	3.76 (1.93)	3.30 (1.80)	3.48 (1.77)	3.31 (1.83)	3.58 (1.77)	3.39 (1.79)	3.38 (1.84)	3.23 (1.82)
S3.3	4.13 (1.62)	3.55 (1.27)	4.11 (1.61)	3.98 (1.70)	4.24 (1.55)	4.21 (1.79)	3.79 (1.61)	4.12 (1.54)	4.38 (1.56)
S3.4	3.57 (1.53)	3.54 (1.25)	3.64 (1.60)	3.59 (1.46)	3.56 (1.58)	3.68 (1.34)	3.52 (1.57)	3.39 (1.52)	3.75 (1.63)
S4.1	4.95 (1.53)	4.79 (1.64)	5.12 (1.40)	4.94 (1.51)	4.96 (1.56)	4.89 (1.58)	4.98 (1.47)	4.72 (1.69)	5.24 (1.35)
S4.2	4.34 (1.53)	4.11 (1.56)	4.57 (1.47)	4.28 (1.55)	4.39 (1.52)	3.92 (1.60)	4.58 (1.44)	4.23 (1.53)	4.56 (1.50)
S4.3	3.58 (1.50)	3.60 (1.55)	3.56 (1.44)	3.30 (1.51)	3.78 (1.46)	3.19 (1.51)	3.40 (1.52)	3.87 (1.53)	3.69 (1.37)
S4.4	4.42 (1.59)	4.40 (1.67)	4.44 (1.52)	4.57 (1.57)	4.31 (1.60)	4.60 (1.67)	4.55 (1.50)	4.27 (1.66)	4.35 (1.53)
S5.1	4.07 (1.79)	4.06 (1.84)	4.09 (1.76)	3.93 (1.80)	4.18 (1.79)	4.00 (1.84)	3.87 (1.77)	4.10 (1.84)	4.28 (1.73)
S5.2	4.04 (1.87)	4.16 (1.83)	3.92 (1.91)	4.00 (1.89)	4.07 (1.86)	4.21 (1.92)	3.82 (1.86)	4.12 (1.78)	4.01 (1.96)
S5.3	3.65 (1.63)	3.62 (1.63)	3.67 (1.63)	3.63 (1.66)	3.65 (1.61)	3.94 (1.65)	3.37 (1.64)	3.41 (1.59)	3.93 (1.59)
S5.4	3.80 (1.78)	3.72 (1.82)	3.88 (1.73)	3.55 (1.75)	3.99 (1.78)	3.26 (1.77)	3.79 (1.71)	4.01 (1.81)	3.96 (1.76)
S6.1	3.66 (1.38)	3.57 (1.39)	3.76 (1.37)	3.50 (1.29)	3.79 (1.43)	3.60 (1.35)	3.40 (1.25)	3.55 (1.42)	4.07 (1.40)
S6.2	4.53 (1.65)	4.41 (1.73)	4.64 (1.57)	4.23 (1.72)	4.75 (1.57)	4.30 (1.75)	4.16 (1.71)	4.49 (1.72)	5.06 (1.31)

APPENDIX 2: MORAL REASONING: MEANS (STANDARD DEVIATION) FOR STORIES ACCORDING TO VARIOUS GROUPINGS (continued).

103

S6.3	3.51 (1.42)	3.64 (1.50)	3.38 (1.32)	3.63 (1.47)	3.42 (1.37)	3.81 (1.57)	3.48 (1.38)	3.54 (1.45)	3.30 (1.27)
S6.4	4.98 (1.61)	4.77 (1.78)	5.20 (1.40)	4.73 (1.80)	5.17 (1.44)	4.53 (1.98)	4.90 (1.63)	4.93 (1.63)	5.45 (1.12)
Story 1	15.18 (3.51)	15.33 (3.50)	15.03 (3.53)	15.68 (3.50)	14.08 (3.49)	16.11 (3.38)	15.31 (3.58)	14.82 (3.50)	14.79 (3.49)
Story 2	16.34 (3.37)	16.52 (3.40)	16.17 (3.34)	16.10 (3.59)	16.53 (3.19)	16.11 (3.63)	16.08 (3.59)	16.78 (3.24)	16.24 (3.14)
Story 3	15.22 (3.89)	15.16 (3.92)	15.27 (3.88)	15.11 (4.03)	15.29 (3.80)	15.53 (4.48)	14.76 (3.59)	14.93 (3.51)	15.72 (4.09)
Story 4	17.29 (3.19)	16.90 (3.10)	17.69 (3.24)	17.10 (3.09)	17.44 (3.26)	16.60 (3.02)	17.52 (3.11)	17.09 (3.16)	17.85 (3.36)
Story 5	15.56 (4.08)	15.56 (4.04)	15.56 (4.13)	15.11 (4.42)	15.90 (3.77)	15.42 (4.30)	14.85 (4.54)	15.65 (3.88)	16.18 (3.65)
Story 6	16.69 (3.53)	16.40 (3.75)	16.98 (3.28)	16.09 (3.64)	17.14 (3.39)	16.25 (3.90)	15.95 (3.42)	16.50 (3.68)	17.87 (2.88)
ALL	96.28 (11.03)	95.86 (11.03)	96.70 (11.06)	95.18 (10.96)	97.10 (11.05)	96.02 (11.35)	94.47 (10.66)	95.76 (10.89)	98.65 (11.11)
S1.12	7.93 (2.24)	8.01 (2.27)	7.83 (2.22)	8.07 (2.39)	7.82 (2.12)	8.30 (2.28)	7.87 (2.49)	7.83 (2.25)	7.80 (1.98)
S1.34	7.25 (2.38)	7.31 (2.28)	7.20 (2.48)	7.61 (2.41)	6.99 (2.33)	7.81 (2.29)	7.44 (2.51)	6.99 (2.24)	6.99 (2.45)
S2.12	7.21 (1.93)	7.19 (1.98)	7.23 (1.87)	7.08 (1.92)	7.31 (1.93)	6.87 (1.87)	7.26 (1.96)	7.39 (2.04)	7.21 (1.81)
S2.34	9.13 (2.63)	9.33 (2.53)	8.93 (2.71)	9.02 (2.78)	9.22 (2.51)	9.25 (2.69)	8.82 (2.86)	9.39 (2.44)	9.03 (2.60)
S3.12	7.51 (2.75)	7.50 (2.80)	7.53 (2.70)	7.54 (2.70)	7.50 (2.80)	7.64 (2.95)	7.45 (2.49)	7.41 (2.72)	7.59 (2.90)
S3.34	7.70 (2.34)	7.66 (2.38)	7.74 (2.32)	7.57 (2.51)	7.80 (2.22)	7.89 (2.69)	7.31 (2.33)	7.51 (2.16)	8.13 (2.25)
S4.12	9.29 (2.31)	8.90 (2.49)	9.69 (2.04)	9.22 (2.25)	9.35 (2.36)	8.81 (2.60)	9.56 (1.85)	8.95 (2.44)	9.80 (2.20)
S4.34	8.00 (2.23)	8.00 (2.32)	8.00 (2.14)	7.88 (2.21)	8.09 (2.25)	7.79 (2.32)	7.95 (2.12)	8.13 (2.32)	8.04 (2.17)
S5.12	8.12 (2.82)	8.21 (2.86)	8.02 (2.80)	7.93 (2.98)	8.25 (2.70)	8.21 (2.83)	7.69 (3.10)	8.22 (2.89)	8.30 (2.49)
S5.34	7.44 (2.48)	7.34 (2.49)	7.55 (2.47)	7.18 (2.43)	7.64 (2.50)	7.21 (2.41)	7.16 (2.47)	7.43 (2.54)	7.89 (2.44)
S6.12	8.19 (2.29)	7.99 (2.34)	8.40 (2.23)	7.72 (2.19)	8.54 (2.31)	7.91 (2.26)	7.56 (2.14)	8.04 (2.41)	9.13 (2.06)
S6.34	8.50 (2.31)	8.41 (2.58)	8.58 (2.01)	8.37 (2.50)	8.59 (2.16)	8.34 (2.85)	8.39 (2.19)	8.46 (2.42)	8.75 (1.83)

APPENDIX 3:

MORAL REASONING: SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE MEANS FOR EACH RESPONSE OF VARIOUS PARTICIPANT GROUPINGS.

STORY	<u>Male</u> <u>vs Females</u>	13/14 vs 17/18	<u>M13/14</u> <u>vs M17/18</u>	F13/14 vs F17/18	M13/14 vs F13/14	M17/18 vs F17/18
S1.1	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND
S1.2	ND	ND	p<0.05	ND	ND	ND
S1.3	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND
S1.4	ND	p<0.03	ND	ND	ND	ND
S2.1	ND	ND	ND	p<0.04	p<0.05	ND
S2.2	ND	p<0.04	ND	ND	ND	ND
S2.3	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND
S2.4	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND
S3.1	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND
S3.2	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND
S3.3	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND
S3.4	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND
S4.1	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	p<0.04
S4.2	p<0.02	ND	ND	ND	p<0.03	ND
S4.3	ND	p<0.01	p<0.02	ND	ND	ND
S4.4	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND
S5.1	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND
S5.2	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND
S5.3	ND	ND	ND	p<0.05	ND	p<0.05
S5.4	ND	p<0.05	p<0.02	ND	ND	ND
S6.1	ND	ND	ND	p<0.01	ND	p<0.03
S6.2	ND	p<0.01	ND	p<0.01	ND	p<0.03
S6.3	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND
S6.4	p<0.04	p<0.03	ND	p<0.02	ND	p<0.03
S1.12	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND
S1.34	ND	p<0.04	p<0.04	ND	ND	ND
S2.12	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND
S2.34	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND
S3.12	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND
S3.34	ND	ND	ND	p<0.05	ND	ND
S4.12	p<0.01	ND	ND	ND	ND	p<0.03
S4.34	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND
S5.12	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND
S5.34	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND
S6.12	ND	p<0.01	ND	p<0.01	ND	p<0.01
S6.34	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND	ND

ND = No significant difference